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DISSERTATION

**AMERICAN NAVAL THINKING IN THE POST-COLD
WAR ERA: THE U.S. NAVY AND THE EMERGENCE OF A
MARITIME STRATEGY, 1989–2007**

by

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June 2013

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NAVY AND THE EMERGENCE OF A MARITIME STRATEGY, 1989–2007**

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ABSTRACT

The study links a description and what is at times an unpleasant analysis of the evolution of U.S. naval strategy from 1989 to 2007, which marked the release of a maritime strategy called *A Cooperative Strategy for 21st Century Seapower*, to an explanation of the forces that influenced its course. The study seeks to understand how the U.S. Navy arrived at its current strategic outlook and why it took nearly two decades for a maritime strategy to emerge in an era in which the relative saliency of such should have been more apparent. It argues that the Cold War's unexpected passing did little to alter the conceptual framework that governed U.S. strategy or the structure of American naval thinking, whose respective elements and their interactions pushed maritime-oriented ideas to the margins during the post-Cold War era as they had during the Cold War. It took an implausible series of events for a maritime strategy to emerge, which included the shock that the United States could lose its war in Iraq—which called into question long-standing assumptions about U.S. strategy, threatened the Navy's relevance, and brought about a systemically oriented U.S. strategic approach—and the appearance of two maritime-minded Navy leaders.

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LIST OF ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

CINC	Commander in Chief of a unified command
CNO	Chief of Naval Operations
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
NDP	Naval Doctrine Publication
OPNAV	Office of the Chief of Naval Operations
OSD	Office of the Secretary of Defense
QDR	Quadrennial Defense Review
SSBN	Ballistic Missile Nuclear Submarine

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I. INTRODUCTION

A. PURPOSE

In its *A Cooperative Strategy for 21st Century Seapower*, which was released in October 2007, the U.S. Navy sought not only to redefine the terms of its own relevance, but also to make a revolutionary argument about where the vital interests of the United States lie and the nature of U.S. naval power in relation to those interests. The Navy argued that those interests should be seen not in terms of the *threats* to U.S. territory and lives, but in light of the relationship between the United States and the global economic and political *system*. It argued that since the United States’ “security, prosperity, and vital interests...are increasingly coupled to those of other nations, its interests are best served by fostering a peaceful global system comprised of interdependent networks of trade, finance, information, law, people and governance.”¹ This, it must be emphasized, is not a recapitulation of a rhetorical claim, familiar since the founding of the Republic, that America’s interests are mankind’s interests. It is, essentially, the opposite of that.

This system is the source from which the United States draws most of its power, influence, and ability to provide for and defend its way of life, the homeland, and the system itself. This system is the well-spring of U.S. power, which should not be surprisingly as it was designed by the United States as such. The institutions, regimes, and practices of this system, many of which were developed by the United States and its key allies during and shortly after the Second World War, were designed to privilege U.S. interests and those of its key security and economic partners.² During the Cold War,

¹ *A Cooperative Strategy for 21st Century Seapower*, Chief of Naval Operations Admiral Gary Roughead, Commandant of the Marine Corps General James T. Conway, and Commandant of the Coast Guard Admiral Thad W. Allen (Department of the Navy, Office of the Chief of Naval Operations, Washington, DC, October 2007), 2.

² The most notable of these institutions was the Bretton Woods system of trade and monetary regimes, which sought to prevent a reoccurrence of global depression and world war by establishing regimes soon after the Second World War that addressed the factors that were thought to have ultimately caused them. Bretton Woods’s monetary and fiscal policies established the international monetary system that structured international financial and trade relations.

the United States fashioned itself into a powerful systemic leader and manager of a highly successful liberal political and economic order by controlling the international monetary and financial structures it designed into the system and providing a nuclear umbrella to its trading partners. In positioning the United States and its core of industrialized allies to take advantage of such instruments, the U.S. government engineered the rise of its liberal political and economic order in war-torn Europe and Japan and the concomitant downfall of imperialism worldwide while establishing a viable alternative to the Soviets' vision of European modernity. In practical terms then, this system might be described more accurately as the U.S. liberal economic and political system, a system whose designers understood the notion that economic power is the father of military power.

With its *A Cooperative Strategy*, the Navy argued that the U.S. maritime services—Navy, Marine Corps, and Coast Guard—have a uniquely preeminent role in protecting the system and sustaining the United States' leadership position within it. By helping to prevent large-scale war and mitigating other systemic disruptions, they underwrite the political, commercial, and security conditions necessary for global prosperity. They knit broader interests with like-minded states in ways that air forces and armies cannot. Since world trade is essentially maritime trade, any compromise of the United States' ability to secure the freedom of the seas and specifically ensure the flow of petroleum threatens the prosperity of the United States, its allies, and trading partners, all of whom, regardless of rivalries, share a common interest in systemic prosperity, growth, and stability. By advancing a cooperative systemic strategy, one that takes full account of the strategic importance of wealth accumulation and distribution, the Navy acknowledged that its own strategic outlook, and by implication that of the United States, was too militaristic, too operationally vice strategically focused. No longer can military goals be considered separate from economic and political ones or, in the military sphere, privileged over strategic ones.

The funny thing is, *A Cooperative Strategy* might have been developed at any time since the Second World War and most certainly since the Soviet Union's collapse. If one were to take a copy of *A Cooperative Strategy* and replace words like “global” with

“the Free World” or “NATO” (the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, which was named appropriately enough after the ocean that separated and, from a naval perspective, unified the allies), and otherwise read it in the context of Cold War geopolitics, one might reasonably come away with the impression that it might have been written at any time since 1945. After all, the Cold War was fundamentally a struggle between two anti-colonial great powers striving to prove the efficacy of their respective systemic models, which were rooted in their beliefs about the state-market relationship, only one of which proved elastic enough to make up for the miscues of its leaders and effective enough to elevate standards of living and meet societal expectations. Among the reasons why the United States won the Cold War was that nearly all the world’s richest states ended up on its side linked by a robust network of trade that was sustained and connected by American sea power. In the final analysis, the strength of the U.S. system proved more instrumental in ending the war than any explicit U.S. strategy.

After the Cold War, when the Free World was expanding into the globalized world, and with it America’s responsibilities, one might have expected that the Navy—no longer burdened with having to prepare for great-power war—would redefine itself in systemic terms and even physically restructure the fleet more for its constabulary and diplomatic roles and less so for its warfighting role.³ Given its unique relationship to the United States’ state-market system, no other U.S. military service was more suited to invoke and extend a systemic history of the Cold War (and its role therein) as a basis for a more systemic vision of U.S. post-war strategy. The Cold War had, ostensibly, validated the relationship between global naval power, economic globalization, and liberal political integration. The United States’ role as systemic manager had not changed, nor had its geostrategic position astride the trade routes of Europe, Asia, and the Middle East, a reminder that sea power is not just about warships.

³ Colin S. Gray, *The Navy in the Post-Cold War World: The Uses and Value of Strategic Sea Power* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University, 1994), 190. In general, navies are thought to have three roles, warfighting, diplomatic, and constabulary.

It is puzzling that the Navy did not advance *A Cooperative Strategy* much earlier because it is a *maritime strategy* as classically understood. A maritime strategy is well-suited to the interests of a state whose prosperity and security interests have always been linked to and depended upon the vitality of the world economy, and to the free markets, open societies, and democratic politics that have (so far) accompanied sustained economic success. A maritime strategy has always been more directly concerned with the relationship between the state and global markets than those associated with land or air power, a statement as true of the Age of Sail as it is today. A maritime strategy ties economic, political, and security interests, and offers a holistic, less militarized and threat-centric worldview that, in this case, was free to emerge with the disappearance of the Soviet threat.

Yet, despite an institutional history that speaks of an intimate relationship between U.S. foreign policy, trade, and the Navy, and more than sufficient encouragement from the Navy's own Alfred Thayer Mahan (1840–1914)—the maritime theorist, naval advocate, and political economist who famously related international relations, economic prosperity, and naval power—the Navy did not advance a maritime strategy in an era in which the relative saliency of such should have, in principle, been much more apparent. In short, *A Cooperative Strategy* might have been developed at any time since the end of the Cold War, if not well before. That it was not, is not because its ideas are new or complicated, but because the forces that shape how the Navy thinks and learns effectively pushed those ideas to the margins of official consideration. This study seeks to understand how the Navy arrived at its current strategic outlook and why it took nearly two decades for a maritime strategy to emerge. It asks two questions—1) *Why did the Navy not develop a maritime strategy earlier in the post-Cold War era?* and 2) *What explains why it eventually did?*

The study aims to fill what is by any standard a glaring deficiency in the strategic literature. It is now nearly twenty-five years since the end of the Cold War and an appraisal of the general trend of strategic thought on the part of the world's only remaining global Navy is long overdue. Yet, there is not a single monograph on U.S.

naval strategy in the post-Cold War era, the lack of which, among others, detracts from the effectiveness of U.S. strategy.⁴ Toward that end, the study clarifies the contemporary context and assesses expectations of how the Navy may confront equally disorienting changes in the future.

B. ARGUMENT

The study examines U.S. naval strategy from the fall of the Berlin Wall in November 1989 to the release of *A Cooperative Strategy* in November 2007. It links a description and what is at times an unpleasant analysis of U.S. naval strategy in the post-Cold War era to an explanation of the forces that influenced its course. It argues that one cannot understand U.S. naval strategy in the post-Cold War era without understanding the forces that shaped it during the Cold War as its unexpected passing did little to alter the conceptual framework that governed U.S. strategy or the structure of American naval thinking, whose elements and their interactions worked to push maritime-oriented ideas to the margins during the post-Cold War era much as they had during the Cold War. It took an implausible series of events for a maritime strategy to emerge, which, among others, included the shock that the United States could lose its war in Iraq—which called into question long-standing assumptions about U.S. strategy, threatened the Navy’s relevance, and brought about a systemically oriented U.S. strategic approach—and the appearance of two maritime-minded Navy leaders.

1. Why Did the Navy Not Develop a Maritime Strategy Earlier?

The logic inherent in U.S. strategy during the Cold War bounded and channeled U.S. naval strategy away from a maritime strategy. The RAND-school of civilian strategic theorists rooted a way of thinking that was hyper-rationalist, apolitical, and

⁴ The only comprehensive work is Peter M. Swartz’s well-regarded series of PowerPoint briefs on the Navy’s declaratory strategy documents from 1970 to 2010. Swartz, an analyst at the Center for Naval Analyses and retired Navy captain who helped craft the 1980s *Maritime Strategy*, examines each in terms of its purpose, ideas, and context. The fourteen PowerPoint briefs (in PDF) on what he calls the “Navy’s Capstone Strategies” are available at <http://www.cna.org/capstone-strategies>.

ahistorical. The nuclear bomb had, as Henry Kissinger put it, “turned strategy into deterrence, and deterrence into an esoteric intellectual exercise.”⁵ Viewed as a cost-effective means of deterring and, failing that, winning war, the bomb obviated the need for the United States to develop an excellence in systemic management and alliance diplomacy, and made the tasks of hegemonic statecraft less complex and far easier.⁶ How liberal, alliance-based maritime powers had defeated continental hegemony in the past was not taken into account. Instead, U.S. strategy fixated on the Soviet threat, the balance of military power, and deterring a hot war—not winning a cold one. American vital interests, U.S. strategy, and the U.S. military’s purpose were defined in terms of the threat and not the system.

The U.S. military’s adherence to the rationalist tradition of Swiss military theorist Baron Antoine-Henri Jomini (1779–1869) reinforced the separation between military goals and economic and political goals. The Jominian approach—which reduces complex problems to apolitical principles that, if followed, would lead to quick and decisive victories—blithely assumed that the political goals for which a war was to be fought would somehow be realized after the field of battle had been won. Seduced by Jomini’s formula of efficiency, the U.S. military focused more on how to realize high-tech shortcuts to quick and decisive victory, particularly by applying the nation’s preferred mode of warfare—air power, than on how to use force for greater political effect.

Having been relieved from figuring out how to win a seemingly perpetual cold war and, given constant inter-service rivalry and the high cost and demands of modern weapons systems, Congress and the Department of Defense’s civilian leaders focused on turning the department into a well-run business. The latter imposed a centrally controlled programming and budgeting process and the rationality of the science of management in which the coin of the realm was marginal cost-benefit analysis. In so doing, they shifted

⁵ Henry Kissinger, *Diplomacy* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1994), 608.

⁶ Colin S. Gray, “Strategy in the Nuclear Age: The United States, 1945–1991,” in *The Making of Strategy: Rulers, States, and War*, ed. Williamson Murray, MacGregor Knox, and Alvin Bernstein (Cambridge: Cambridge University, 1994), 582.

the locus of U.S. strategy-making from the *ways-means-ends* dialectic that is strategy to determining the *means* thereby marginalizing the Navy's ability to influence U.S. strategy. In short, the style of U.S. defense leadership was industrial-managerial, not strategic, while the outlook of U.S. strategy was scientific-methodological, technological-dependent, and profoundly pragmatic, which, not surprisingly, mirrored American culture.

The logic inherent in American naval thinking was not any more conducive to the Navy's development of a maritime strategy. The Cold War did not demand much competency in systemic thought on the part of the U.S. government, which meant that it did not demand the same of its navy. Relieved from that task, the Navy was allowed to frame its own rationality, identity, and strategic outlook. These were rooted in the institution's seminal event, the Pacific War against Japan, a campaign that demonstrated the versatility and flexibility of a balanced, aircraft carrier-based fleet (balanced in the sense that it included air, surface, and subsurface forces). The campaign vindicated how the Navy saw the purpose of its officers, which was to apply an adaptable mindset and technological knowledge to the problems associated with war at sea. The establishment after the Second World War of lengthy overseas deployments as standard practice meant that the institution's knowledge became almost exclusively operational-experiential. "Operations"—meaning being at sea—became the lens by which Navy officers viewed the world and, to most in the Navy, its *raison d'être*. Given the constant demands of operations and advancing naval technology, Navy officers now had little room in their careers to take up the (potentially) career-damaging task of contemplating the Navy's purpose beyond operations. Given its pragmatic outlook, that which was learned and inculcated was limited to that which was useful operationally.

The institution's knowledge base narrowed further in the 1960s when Secretary of Defense Robert S. McNamara embedded his programming and budgetary process. The process became the essential means by which the U.S. military services protected their respective identities, preferred weapons systems, and relevance. For the Navy, no problem was viewed as more critical or long-standing during the Cold War than the need

to justify its strategic relevance on a par with that of the Air Force and Army; neither the Navy's purpose in U.S. strategy nor the reasons for its force structure were ever self-evident. Consequently, the Navy sent its best, most promising officers to the Pentagon between tours at sea to manage and justify its weapons systems programs, where these officers found more success if they rationalized these multi-million dollar programs in terms of the Soviet threat. Navy officers now assumed leadership positions devoid of anything but operational and programmatic experience and technical-technological knowledge, none of which required a deeper understanding of the Navy's purpose. The Navy thus produced leaders whose intellects were of a peculiar mixture—one that combined brilliance with the narrowness of the institution's rationality and knowledge base. In short, U.S. naval strategy during the Cold War was simply the application of the narrow professional experiences of Navy officers to the solution of problems associated with operating, procuring, and rationalizing a generic and forward deployed fleet.⁷

Their backgrounds shaped an implicit institutional strategic outlook that was an intuitive expression of how they defined the Navy's purpose and identity. That purpose was not instrumental strategically, but contingent operationally. The Navy prized being prepared for the unknown over understanding its strategic effects. It sought to maintain the operational flexibility that came with an offensive minded, forward deployed, and balanced, carrier-based fleet that was central to its identity as a warfighting organization and key to its ability and demand to be prepared to project power across an enormous range of circumstances. Emblematic of its contingent outlook was the carrier, the ultimate hedge against the unknown. Its versatility allowed the Navy to participate meaningfully in a wide breadth of missions, from nuclear retaliation, full-scale and limited war, day-to-day foreign policy needs, and a myriad of ways short of war, a range unique among the Services. Absent a Pearl Harbor-like attack or rapid unexpected technological obsolescence, the fleet's composition cannot be changed overnight. Hence, the Cold War

⁷ David A. Rosenberg, "Process: The Realities of Formulating Modern Naval Strategy," in *Mahan is Not Enough: The Proceedings of a Conference on the Works of Sir Julian Corbett and Admiral Sir Herbert Richmond*, ed. James Goldrick and John B. Hattendorf (Newport, RI: Naval War College, 1993), 145.

Navy balked at attempts to narrow the fleet's capabilities to conform to a White House-mandated vision of war. A carrier-based fleet accommodated shifts in the strategic and operational environs and in U.S. declaratory strategy more readily than one specialized for nuclear retaliation or sea control, for example. Specialization meant operational vulnerability, which meant political vulnerability. Only when the fleet was built to handle just about any contingency and was forward deployed (which cost only marginally more than keeping it tied up), could American sea power be fully realized operationally and rationalized politically.

The Navy's emphasis on operational experience, warfighting skills, technological knowledge, and resource management proficiency on the part of its officers was a reasoned response to the operational, technological, managerial, and political demands of the Cold War. But it came at the expense of a greater understanding or a desire to understand the Navy's strategic effects, redress the inchoate nature of sea power theory, and grasp the nature of the war between the Soviet and U.S. systems enough to develop the functioning and legitimating ideas behind a maritime strategy, a state of affairs the Navy only dimly understood and yet casually dismissed throughout the Cold War (and after). The logic inherent in American naval thinking was internally consistent with excellence in naval warfare, indeed exquisitely so given the Navy's operational performance over the last seventy years. But that which made the Navy arguably the most operationally adaptable of the Services made it intellectually weak and uninterested in understanding its strategic effects, which was ironic as no other U.S. military service could claim such a unique and direct relationship with the U.S.-managed system and lay claim to a central role in the United States' systemic Cold War victory.

In the end, the Cold War taught the Navy how to exploit the trade winds of U.S. strategy and defense policy, the currents of U.S. foreign policy, and catch the occasional wave of American insecurity and budgetary permissiveness. The Navy came to view changing environmental conditions rather in the way sailors view the wind—as something that may only limit your options without necessarily changing your mind about where you want to go. The goal was to remain a forward deployed and balanced,

carrier-based fleet, and the Navy tacked and wore as needed to maintain that general bearing.

After the end of the Cold War, Congress and the leaders of the Department of Defense focused on downsizing the military and optimizing how it fought. The Goldwater-Nichols Act of 1986 had elevated the stature of the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff and the commanders in chief of the unified commands (known as “CINCs,” which was changed to “combatant commanders” in 2002). It demanded the Services integrate, termed “jointness,” and empowered the chairman to mandate a single vision that defined the military’s purpose. That vision was about how “revolutionary” precision strike and informational capabilities would deliver a swift and decisive victory against a generic foe in lieu of (or in support) of ground troops, a vision that was seen to have been vindicated in various operations throughout the 1990s. Goldwater-Nichols also further limited the Navy’s ability to influence strategy, and altered how the Navy’s senior uniformed leader, the Chief of Naval Operations (CNO), understood his role. To him, the White House, the secretary of defense, and chairman determined the *ends*, the CINCs determined the *ways*, while he and his staff, the Office of the Chief of Naval Operations (OPNAV—also known as the Navy Staff), focused on the *means*. The CNO assumed that he was not responsible for anything other than equipping, training, and organizing the Navy—strategy was someone else’s job.

The end of the Cold War found Navy leaders and strategists intellectually unprepared to advance a peacetime maritime strategy. It is, however, not unreasonable to assume that if such strategy had been developed (a stretch, granted), it would have rejected by Congress and the Pentagon’s leaders because anything not aligned with the prescribed “vision” would be viewed as solipsistic, a reminder that strategic ideas are contingent; one’s strategy depends on everyone else’s. Strategy—the relating of military force and political purpose—is an inherently practical endeavor. As Bernard Brodie

noted, “The question that matters in strategy is...will the idea work?”⁸ Moreover, Congress and the Department of Defense’s civilian leaders had come to see the Navy’s purpose in light of the Soviet threat, which the Navy itself did much to bring about because it had rationalized itself, particularly in the late Cold War, exclusively in those terms.

Marginalized by the lessons drawn by the defense establishment from the 1990–91 Gulf War, the Navy was not about to challenge the direction of U.S. strategy. It soon found that direction accommodating enough, and aligned itself with U.S. strategy’s focus on warfighting, regional conflict, jointness, and strike warfare. The latter was a capability the Navy was well positioned to embrace technologically and conceptually, and was reflected in its new focus on adversaries ashore as captured in its 1992 ...*From the Sea*. The move protected the carriers, which were now needed in the scenarios facing U.S. forces, scenarios in which the carriers had excelled during the Cold War. The Navy staked its claim on the ability to provide the CINCs with a breadth of capabilities, none more critical than striking targets ashore on very short notice. As in the Cold War, the gravitational pull of advanced technologies and associated concepts was the safest and surest route to budgetary success. A flexible, power-projecting fleet allowed the Navy to justify itself in terms of major combat operations against regional powers (the Army’s and the Air Force’s *raison d’être* and the locus of U.S. strategy) and as an everyday instrument of U.S. statecraft.

2. Why Did the Navy Subsequently Develop a Maritime Strategy?

The invasions of Afghanistan in 2001 and Iraq in 2003 were seen as vindicating the direction of post-Cold War American strategy. In short order, however, the failure to counter the Iraqi insurgency exposed as insufficient the American way of war, which assumed, wrongly, that tactical and operational success would speak for itself. The military had equated a theory of discrete destruction with a theory of success in war, and

⁸ Bernard Brodie, “Why Were We So (Strategically) Wrong?” *Foreign Policy* 5 (Winter 1971–72): 151.

wrongly assumed that political goals like stability and democracy would be realized in the wake of technology-enabled battlefield victories. This complacent outlook disintegrated in 2005 and with it the importance of jointness, strike warfare, talismanic strike warfare and information technologies, and high-end conventional capabilities. For the Navy, the winds were shifting unfavorably; the campaigns in Iraq and Afghanistan, which only marginally involved the Navy, promised to elevate irregular warfare and the Army's and Marine Corps's standing and undermine the Navy relevance for at least a decade. In contrast with previous generational wars, the Navy was unable to catch the wave of societal insecurity and fiscal permissiveness that had sustained the fleet's size and preferred composition in the past.

In 2005–06, two Navy leaders—CNO Admiral Mike Mullen and Vice Admiral John Morgan—recognized in the confused context a set of trends that presented an opportunity to advance a maritime strategy. They sought to shift the national-level debate about the direction of U.S. strategy to one that was more appropriate to U.S. interests in a globalizing era, one that sought to protect and sustain U.S. leadership over its system. They also sought to shift the institution's internal debate about the Navy's purpose in light of that approach as a way to secure the institution's long-term relevance. From their perspective, globalization had shifted the security calculus toward a greater emphasis on economics, which is the central element around which any maritime (as distinct from naval) strategy is organized. Globalization had made the world's nations more interdependent and their prosperity more dependent on the smooth functioning of the system.⁹ In a more multi-polar world, a unilateral, preemptive, and threat-centric

⁹ Globalization is the process of increasing interconnectedness between societies that is brought about by the expansive movement of trade, capital, information, and ideas. Globalization is creating economic and political interdependencies, and is shrinking the world such that events on one side of the world are felt more and with more impact by those elsewhere. The contemporary phenomenon of globalization is driven by a revolution in computer and telecommunication technologies, the spread of Western rationality, norms, and culture, and the worldwide movement to free-market economies, the last of which was enabled by democratic governments, which transferred much of the governments' economic decision-making to the market. Many argue that globalization is changing the nature of governance, and specifically that it is undermining the ability of states to govern, which consequently requires more cooperative instruments to govern effectively. "These arguments," as David Held and Anthony McGrew note, "suggest that the modern state is increasingly embedded in webs of regional and global interconnectedness permeated by

approach, which had been applied in Iraq with destabilizing effect, was inimical to American interests. A collective and defensive-minded approach that focused on maintaining the status quo of U.S. systemic leadership and with it continued global prosperity by applying the unique ability of maritime forces to connect interests, expand markets, and open societies to liberal ideas would be more appropriate in such an era. American allies and partners, whom, it was hoped, could pitch in and share the United States' increasingly expensive burdens as systemic security manager, would more readily support such an approach.

These trends also included an emerging U.S. strategic approach that portrayed the United States as the guardian of the system, a shift that came in 2005 from the trauma that the United States could lose its war in Iraq. The system's functioning was threatened by al-Qaeda, which was not only collocated with the world's largest supply of petroleum and maritime choke points through which it and most of global trade flowed, but, from an existential perspective, was alienated from and hostile to the system. A maritime strategy would also place the Army's and Marine Corps's efforts into a wider perspective in a way that did not impugn their efforts, yet asserted the Navy's broader strategic relevance and could do so without unduly denying the Navy's previous post-Cold War strategic approach. Mullen (whose late-career conversion to a maritime perspective was rather implausible) and Morgan (whose appointment as an admittedly non-promotable three-star to the traditionally upwardly mobile position of deputy CNO for Plans, Policies and Operations [N3/N5] equally so) hoped to place the Navy in an advantageous position when the ground campaigns in Iraq and Afghanistan were coming to a close and U.S. leaders were debating a new strategic direction. Americans—tired of messy, open-ended interventions that called U.S. leadership into question and indebted the nation to its economic competitors—might welcome a systemic approach, one that sought foremost to

quasi-supranational, intergovernmental and transnational forces, and unable to determine its own fate. Such developments...challenge both the sovereignty and legitimacy of states." Held and McGrew, "The Great Globalization Debate," in David Held and Anthony McGrew, eds., *The Global Transformations Reader*, 2nd ed. (London: Polity Press/Blackwell Publishing, 2003), 13.

extend U.S. leadership over a system that has sustained its preeminence and brought untold prosperity and freedom to expanding parts of the world.

C. METHODOLOGY AND SOURCES

The officers of the U.S. Navy are the product of their experiences—as is, ultimately, U.S. naval strategy, which may be defined as the relating of seaborne U.S. military force to political purpose (and vice versa).¹⁰ These experiences are acquired amid many years spent at sea operating complex technology and advancing in a meritocracy during which time they assimilate institutional beliefs—which are understood, if not perfectly—and assumptions, which are hidden and therefore difficult to grasp, particularly for outsiders.¹¹ These experiences structure how they think, what they believe the Navy’s purpose and aspirations to be, and how they come to understand naval strategy and define and solve the problems associated with it. These experiences are applied later in their careers while serving in high-level strategy and policy-making positions, a context where the Navy’s iterative, multi-level staffing and consensually driven strategy-making process means that U.S. naval strategy is more the product of the institution of the U.S. Navy than it is of individual leaders.¹²

The study focuses on the Navy’s strategy-making process, the process where Navy officers’ ideas are assembled, negotiated, and reshaped in light of a range of exogenous influences—which includes, for example, the direction of U.S. strategy, budgetary constraints, and perceived threats—and the competing interests of other domestic political and internal actors, because even though the subject of the study is

¹⁰ For the methodology employed here, see Rosenberg, “Process.”

¹¹ As Herbert A. Simon noted, one “does not live for months or years in...an organization, exposed to some streams of communication, shielded from others, without the most profound effects upon what he knows, believes, attempts to, hopes, wishes, emphasizes, fears, and proposes.” Simon, *Administrative Behavior*, 3rd ed. (New York: Free Press, 1976), xvi.

¹² David A. Rosenberg, “American Naval Strategy in the Era of the Third World War: An Inquiry in the Structure and Process of General War at Sea, 1945–90,” in *Naval Power in the Twentieth Century*, ed. N. A. M. Rodger (New York: Macmillan, 1996), 243.

American naval thinking, and in this regard it must be emphasized that the concept itself is somewhat metaphorical as only people can think, that is how real strategy is made.

The study examines how key U.S. naval strategic statements and policies were developed and the documents themselves, which are manifestations of American naval thought. These statements and policies were developed in OPNAV, the Navy's Pentagon-based headquarters, and not by the Navy's operational commanders, who answer to the CINCs/combatant commanders of the unified commands, of which there are two types—geographic and functional (e.g., U.S. Pacific Command and U.S. Transportation Command, respectively), and the secretary of defense. In general, the statements are self-generated and episodic. They varied in form, substance, authorship, the problems for they sought to solve, and their intended audience, such as the members of the Navy, the White House, Congress, Department of Defense leaders and their staffs, the CINCs/combatant commanders and their staffs, defense analysts, and American society. These statements provided the CNO a way to rationalize the Navy and its claims on the defense budget, establish a conceptual framework to align the activities of a complex warfighting organization, and provide views on the maritime dimensions of U.S. strategy.

Sources included a wide variety of histories—strategic, domestic political, foreign policy, defense policy, military, institutional, operational, bureaucratic, social-cultural, pedagogic, and intellectual—as well as dissertations, biographies, congressional testimony, speeches, and articles in professional journals, magazines, and newspapers. The research effort included discussions with senior Navy leaders and strategists and their correspondence as well as documents about how and why the statements and policies were developed and the statements themselves. These were supplemented by insights gleaned during a career in the Navy, which included tours in joint and Navy strategy-making directorates.

D. OUTLINE

Chapter II establishes the experiential basis of the Navy officers that determined U.S. naval strategy in the post-Cold War era, the most senior of whom entered the U.S.

Naval Academy in the late 1940s. It traces how the Navy emerged from the Second World War with a distinct rationality and core assumptions and beliefs and how they both shaped and were reshaped by the Navy's Cold War experiences. The post-Cold War era chapters are named after a strategic statement or professional journal article emblematic of that period, which, in the case of Chapter III, was CNO Carlisle Trost's "A Maritime Strategy for the 1990s" (1990). The chapter examines his unsuccessful attempt to apply the logic of the Navy's highly successful Cold War *Maritime Strategy* to the post-Cold War era. Chapter IV, "The Way Ahead," which was an article co-signed by CNO Frank Kelso and his Marine Corps counterpart in 1991, examines Kelso's focus on optimizing managerial processes and protecting the fleet's composition, and the unbidden attempt by Navy and Marine Corps strategists to devise a post-Cold War strategy. Chapter V highlights how the Navy's perceived inadequate performance in the 1990–91 Gulf War influenced naval thinking, and traces the development of the strike warfare-oriented ...*From the Sea*, which was signed by Kelso and his Marine Corps counterpart in 1992 and which set the course of U.S. naval strategy until 2006–07. Chapter VI examines the revolutionary changes in the Navy's resource decision-making process and the development of *Forward...From the Sea*, the Clinton administration's only marginally changed version of ...*From the Sea*, which was co-signed in 1994 by CNO Mike Boorda and his Marine Corps counterpart.

Chapters VII, VIII, and IX cover 1995 to 2000, a period when Navy leaders held little interest in things strategic, preoccupied as they were with managing the Tailhook scandal and shrinking budgets. Chapter VII examines the orthodoxy of "jointness," the ill-fated attempts to consummate in doctrinal terms the Navy-Marine Corps partnership laid out in ...*From the Sea*, the onset of the Revolution in Military Affairs in precision-strike and information technologies, and the unsigned "2020 Vision," which was a vision of the decisiveness of naval strike warfare. Chapter VIII examines 1996–97, when CNO Jay Johnson kept a low profile for the Navy, and when naval strategy boiled down to securing a new carrier strike aircraft. On the margins, Navy strategists developed a new operational concept, while Johnson's article "Anytime, Anywhere" (1997) was another in

a series of statements that reiterated the Navy's operational virtues. Chapter IX examines the development of the unsigned "A Maritime Strategy for the 21st Century" (1999), which advanced an expansive understanding of U.S. sea power and its follow-on, the signed but aborted Strategic Planning Guidance (2000).

Chapter X examines how Navy strategists sought to organize CNO Vern Clark's revolutionary managerial changes while advancing a heavily kinetic, power-projecting vision of decisive naval power in *Sea Power 21*, which Clark signed in 2002. Chapter XI examines the unbidden, contested, and unsigned 3/1 Strategy, which was developed by Vice Admiral John Morgan in 2005, the last year of Clark's tenure. Chapter XII details how CNO Mike Mullen and Morgan in late 2005 and 2006 developed the 1,000-Ship Navy, which, like the 3/1 Strategy, was a stepping stone to *A Cooperative Strategy*. Chapter XIII traces the development of *A Cooperative Strategy*. The conclusion examines what transpired after its release, summarizes the recurrent themes of U.S. naval strategy in the post-Cold War era, explores *A Cooperative Strategy*'s prospects, and offers recommendations.

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II. PROLOGUE: THE COLD WAR

A. THE PACIFIC CAMPAIGN: INSTITUTIONAL APOTHEOSIS

The seminal event in the history of the U.S. Navy, the one that would most profoundly shape its institutional identity and strategic outlook, was the Pacific Campaign against Japan. Before the war, sea power had been about victory *at* sea—about how the indirect effects of controlling the sea enabled victory on land. By virtue of a balanced, carrier-based fleet that bound the once-separate realms of sea and land warfare, an adaptive mindset on the part of its officers, and the sheer scale of its forces, the Navy revolutionized naval warfare, making sea power a decisive instrument of war *from* the sea. A carrier-based fleet demonstrated enormous versatility across a much broader range of missions than one based on battleships, packing more offensive firepower and offering far more range and mobility as well. Such a fleet broadened the Navy’s purpose far beyond that of destroying the enemy’s fleet, a mission that was passé with the war’s end. The Navy’s apotheosis was short-lived, however. Despite the revolutionary nature of its victory, the Navy found its new identity and relevance, if not its very existence, called into question. The advent of the atomic bomb, combined with the absence of any plausible rival on the high seas, threatened to marginalize the sea service in the post-war era.

B. THE LATE 1940S: THE PRIMACY OF OPERATIONS

In the meantime, however, Navy leaders—already proponents of what would be called “containment”—took it upon themselves in the absence of guidance from President Harry S. Truman to deploy the U.S. fleet around the Soviet Union immediately after the war as a hedge against Soviet aggression. In establishing lengthy overseas deployments, which has remained its *modus operandi* ever since, the Navy maintained its wartime footing. In time, the notion of “operations,” in the simple sense of being at sea with a purpose, grew exalted as a way of life and an institutional goal. Going to sea, with all its romantic and richly textured trappings, and seeing the world is what sailors like to

do. It reflected the need for a compelling identity. “Sailors are meant to be on ships and ships are meant to be at sea,” as the saying goes. To its members, “operations” came about as close to the Navy’s *raison d’être* as any. As Fleet Admiral Earnest J. King stated, “The be-all and end-all of the projected military organization is the conduct of active operations by the active seagoing forces.”¹ The institution’s locus remains these “forces,” termed “the fleet,” which is the reason why the rest of the Navy exists. Its requirements are never questioned, its importance never rivaled. Like operations, the fleet’s salience is supposed to be self-evident.

Operations now provided *the* formative experience in a Navy officer’s life. Whereas in the interwar period, the career path for promising officers included tours at the Naval War College and the materiel-oriented bureaus, a far greater percentage of particularly their early years were now spent at sea. The shift from a seniority- to a merit-based system in the interwar period reinforced the rewarding of those that spent comparatively more time at sea. Operations became the lens by which its officers viewed the world, the defining element of its narrow and empirically based worldview.

Back in the nation’s capital, Truman’s and Congress’s efforts to unify the Services’ roles and missions threatened to deprive the Navy of its new identity and reduce it to a supporting role in the emerging Cold War defense establishment. In the internecine inter-service debates of 1949, the newly established Air Force argued that its nuclear bomb-equipped transcontinental bombers could deliver victory against the Soviet Union more effectively and at a lower cost than could the Navy, whose only purpose lay in its wartime mission of escorting transport ships, which did not require carriers. Even before the Cold War was fully underway, then, the atomic bomb, the apparent apotheosis of interwar theories of strategic bombing, was already threatening the Navy’s relevance, identity, and fleet structure, and casting doubt on the efficacy of a maritime strategy

¹ Thomas B. Buell, *Master of Sea Power: A Biography of Fleet Admiral Ernest J. King* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1980), 236.

against the Soviet Union.² The Air Force's compelling argument of how to wage war in an effective and cost-efficient manner proved irresistible to U.S. leaders. At this early stage of the Cold War, as Colin Gray noted, air power became "both the symbol and the embodiment of American preferences in the deterrence and conduct of war."³

The Air Force's argument was essentially the same one that Mahan had made on behalf of the Navy half a century earlier.⁴ Following Jomini's principle to concentrate superior forces at the decisive point, Mahan argued that the most effective way to command the sea, which ensured one's access to resources via overseas markets and lines of production while severing the enemy's, was to build an offensive, technologically advanced fleet and destroy the enemy's in a quick and decisive engagement.⁵ The prospect that the balance of power could change in an afternoon demanded a single-minded focus on battle. Mahan had elevated tactics to the strategic level. The Jominian approach, wherein the complexity of warfare could be reduced to a set of simple principles that if followed would yield victory, came to embody the U.S. military's approach to war. As Gray noted, "this approach finds a near perfect fit with the promise of victory through air power."⁶ The U.S. military's focus on battle essentially relieved it from the difficult task of understanding just how destroying things would lead to the political goals for which a conflict is waged. As John Shy noted, "By isolating strategy

² Colin S. Gray, "Seapower for Containment: The U.S. Navy in The Cold War," in *Navies and Global Defense: Theories and Strategy*, ed. Keith Neilson and Elizabeth Jane Errington (Westport, CT: Praeger, 1995), 188.

³ Colin S. Gray, "Strategy in the Nuclear Age: The United States, 1945–1991," in *The Making of Strategy: Rulers, States, and War*, ed. Williamson Murray, MacGregor Knox, and Alvin Bernstein (Cambridge: Cambridge University, 1994), 602.

⁴ George W. Baer, *One Hundred Years of Sea Power: The U.S. Navy, 1890–1990* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University, 1994), 3 and 276.

⁵ Decisive victory, as Daniel J. Moran noted, is "victory that goes beyond the accomplishment of some local tactical goal and achieves results of sufficient magnitude to alter the political conditions that brought the war about in the first place." Moran, "Geography and Strategy," in *Strategy in the Contemporary World: An Introduction to Strategic Studies*, ed. John Baylis, James Wirtz, Colin S. Gray, and Eliot Cohen (Oxford: Oxford University, 2007), 125.

⁶ Colin S. Gray, *Explorations in Strategy* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1996), 94.

from its political and social context, Jomini helped to foster a mode of thinking that continues to haunt us.”⁷

To the Navy, Mahan had bequeathed much, including an offensive mindset and an entitling identity as the guarantor of American greatness. He had also supplied a strategic rationale that was so universally accepted as truth as to foreclose the need for proficiency in strategic thought. Mahan’s formula permitted U.S. naval officers to focus on solving tactical and technological problems associated with war at sea without having to take up the uninteresting and career-damaging task of understanding naval power more deeply. The Naval War College sanctioned the focus on battle. As John Hattendorf noted, it sought to instill in its students “A strict and practical method of problem solving, which correlated ends with means and objectives and directed attention to operational and tactical issues. *It did not attempt an analysis of the assumptions behind the objectives.*”⁸ Mahan had provided all that was necessary; the kind of historical analysis and theoretical speculation that Mahan had undertaken to great effect was discouraged.⁹ The purpose of Navy officers was to apply an adaptable mindset and technical-technological knowledge to the problems associated with war at sea, an approach that was seemingly vindicated in the Second World War and institutionalized thereafter. Unlike their Air Force counterparts, Navy officers did not see themselves responsible for understanding and explaining the Navy’s purpose.

The lack of proficiency in strategy thinking on the part of Navy officers was apparent to a few. Admiral Arleigh A. Burke (CNO 1955–61), who had helped defend the Navy during the 1949 debates, noted in retrospect that

⁷ John Shy, “Jomini,” in *Makers of Modern Strategy: From Machiavelli to the Nuclear Age*, ed. Peter Paret (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University, 1986), 164.

⁸ John B. Hattendorf, John R. Wadleigh, and B. Mitchell Simpson, *Sailors and Scholars: The Centennial History of the United States Naval War College* (Newport, RI: Naval War College, 1984), 119. Emphasis added.

⁹ *Ibid.*, 119 and 137.

People in the navy did not know very much about strategy...That's why we did not have any organization to lay out the navy's case or defend ourselves....We suffered from a lack of knowledge within the navy of what the navy was all about....[Accepting that ignorance] was an ingrained attitude, and it had terrible consequences.¹⁰

Navy officers had wrongly assumed that the lessons of Pearl Harbor and the Navy's new style of warfare spoke for themselves. As the president of the Naval War College noted in 1951, "Our understanding and our exposition of the indispensable character of our profession and the undiminished and vital nature of Sea Power have been dangerously superficial and elementary."¹¹ Having realized Mahan's goal of commanding the sea, Navy officers were now finding it difficult to explain the Navy's purpose.

The Korean War helped. The Navy's virtuoso performance, particularly in the conflict's opening months, provided a concrete lesson of the need for a forward deployed and carrier-based fleet in a way that theoretical arguments could not, a lesson not lost upon the Navy. Demonstrating its worth empirically did much to compensate for a lack of a universal theory of usefulness consistent with the scientific approach of U.S. strategy. The Navy's performance ensured that it would never again be subject to the kind of public grilling by Congress that plagued it in the late 1940s.

C. THE 1950S: THE FORMATIVE YEARS

American strategy in the 1950s revolved around President Dwight D. Eisenhower's doctrine of Massive Retaliation, in which military planning was resolved into a massive retaliatory or preemptive nuclear strike on the Soviet Union. The onset of ballistic missiles and thermonuclear bombs refocused war planning from conventional to all-out nuclear war. That and the desire to avoid more messy, costly, and limited wars

¹⁰ Arleigh A. Burke, *Reminiscences of Admiral Arleigh A. Burke, U.S. Navy (Ret.): Special Series on Selected Subjects*, 4 vols. (Annapolis, MD: U.S. Naval Institute, 1979–83), 3: 146 and 4: 472–484, quoted in Baer, *One Hundred Years of Sea Power*, 278.

¹¹ Admiral Richard L. Conolly, letter to Chief of Naval Operations Admiral Forrest P. Sherman, May 1, 1951, quoted in John B. Hattendorf's introduction to Rear Admiral J. C. Wylie, *Military Strategy: A General Theory of Power Control* (1967; Westport, CT: Greenwood, 1989), xxii.

like the one in Korea made U.S. conventional forces virtually irrelevant. Eisenhower believed that military spending of the kind required to compete with the Soviets in conventional terms threatened the nation's economic health. The Air Force, whose Strategic Air Command offered a high degree of strategic leverage per budget dollar, received nearly half the defense budget.

The immense conceptual challenges of waging and deterring nuclear war occasioned the rise of the civilian strategic theorists, who profoundly shaped American strategic thinking. As Fred Kaplan noted, their “wisdom would be taken for granted, their assumptions worshipped as gospel truth, their insight elevated to an almost mystical level and accepted as dogma.”¹² The disciplinary approaches of these theorists, who were by and large physicists, mathematicians, and economists, most of who, at least initially, worked for the RAND Corporation (an Air Force-sponsored think tank), were well suited with dealing with the abstract problems of nuclear war.¹³ These strategic reasoners, almost none of whom had backgrounds in history or international relations, set in motion an apolitical, ahistorical, and hyper-rational style of strategic thinking. They relied heavily on “systems analysis,” which is a marginal cost-benefit methodology, and assumed that strategic decisions were made rationally on a cost-benefit basis—and thus could be predicted. To cite Henry Kissinger again, “The nuclear age turned strategy into deterrence, and deterrence into an esoteric intellectual exercise.”¹⁴ The bomb ushered in an era where the past was thought to be of little use in addressing the problems of the Nuclear Age.¹⁵ How liberal maritime-based alliances had overcome continental enemies in the past was therefore never really examined.

¹² Fred M. Kaplan, *The Wizards of Armageddon* (1983; Stanford, CA: Stanford University, 1991), 11.

¹³ See Bruce Kuklick, *Blind Oracles: Intellectuals and War from Kennan to Kissinger* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University, 2006), 55–60.

¹⁴ Henry Kissinger, *Diplomacy* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1994), 608.

¹⁵ As Colin S. Gray noted, “Much of the frenzied preoccupation in developing a theoretical approach to the three most central ideas of nuclear-age American strategic theory—deterrence, limited war, and arms control—for example, could have been avoided as each has very considerable pre-nuclear analogues.” Gray, *Strategic Studies: A Critical Assessment* (Westport, CT: Greenwood, 1982), 18–19.

American economic beliefs also discouraged relating military power to broader systemic goals. As reflected in the 1941 Atlantic Charter, the U.S. concept of economic security rested on the belief that the best way to facilitate international and domestic growth was through trade via an open market. The use of military force for selfish economic advantage was onerous to Americans in general; the United States was not about building an empire, but tearing them down. The fit of the British paradigm of systemic-based strategy to exigencies of the U.S.-led post-Second World War system was so intuitively assumed by the United States and its Navy not to have raised questions about the requirements of managing the system or its strategic implications.¹⁶ In short, by forward deploying its fleet shortly after the Second World War, for example, Navy leaders intuitively knew what to do generally, but never analyzed the assumptions behind those decisions.

Also during the 1950s, the Cold War became a Manichean crusade and, in the politically charged “Better Dead than Red” atmosphere, U.S. military and domestic political thought merged and became threat-centric, a quality that has been retained, in varying degrees, ever since. Since Soviet nuclear weapons threatened the United States’ existence and Warsaw Pact conventional forces threatened Western Europe, there was little need to relate the military’s purpose beyond that. Given American society’s threat sensitive nature, U.S. politicians who took a hard-line against the Soviets were generally rewarded at the polls.¹⁷

Defining U.S. interests apart from the Soviet threat grew difficult.¹⁸ American strategy became profoundly threat-centric. In short, as Gray noted, “That threat, as

¹⁶ See Dennis E. Showalter, “Toward a Naval History,” in *Doing Naval History: Essays toward Improvement*, ed. John B. Hattendorf (Newport, RI: Naval War College, 1995), 133.

¹⁷ See Campbell Craig and Fredrik Logevall, *America’s Cold War: The Politics of Insecurity* (Cambridge, MA: Belknap, 2009).

¹⁸ John Lewis Gaddis, *Strategies of Containment: A Critical Appraisal of American National Security Policy During the Cold War* (1982; New York: Oxford University, 2005), 96.

variously defined over the years, was not *a* factor helping to define the purposes of U.S. policy, grand strategy, and military strategy. It was *the* factor.”¹⁹

All of this meant that, as Marc Trachtenberg noted, “A broad range of strategic issues, having to do with the way the political and military spheres interact with each other, not just in time of war or crises, but in more normal times as well, was never really closely examined by mainstream American strategic thought.”²⁰ In other words, the possibility that the United States would adapt a systemic strategic approach during the Cold War was never really in the cards.

Also during this time, the Navy established an unarticulated strategy that is best described as “generic operational flexibility.” Key to this outlook was forward deployment, which allowed the Navy to keep its forces in critical areas for longer periods, which reduced the time to respond to crises, deterred conflict, or, failing that, enabled the United States to seize control of the seas and facilitate a seamless transition to war. It allowed presidents to demonstrate resolve, seize the initiative, and control escalation without either anticipating or foreclosing more decisive options down the road. It allowed the Navy to bridge the requirements of preparing for major conflict with the day-to-day needs of U.S. diplomacy in ways that the Army or the Air Force could not duplicate.

The strategy was less the product of explicit strategizing and more an intuitive expression of how the Navy defined its purpose and identity. That purpose was not instrumental strategically, but contingent operationally. Its purpose was to be prepared for a wide variety of circumstances, which was facilitated by forward presence. From that perspective, the strategy’s *means* (a flexible, multi-mission fleet), *ways* (forward deployment and a highly adaptive mindset on the part of its officers) and *ends* (be ready for any almost contingency and for changes in the strategic environment) were logically aligned. Geoffrey Till aptly captured the Navy’s outlook:

¹⁹ Gray, “Strategy in the Nuclear Age,” 599. Emphasis in the original.

²⁰ Marc Trachtenberg, *History and Strategy* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University, 1991), 46.

Because they operate forces of almost infinite flexibility and often cannot find people willing to tell them what to do, sailors have tended to turn to what their critics call “parametric planning.” They resist being tied down to one scenario lest it unsuits them for another and prefer to rely instead on the inherent flexibility of sea power to provide the necessary options. The sailor’s instinctive aversion to the specific and almost mystical faith in the capacity of a first-rate balanced fleet to cope with virtually anything can be distinctly irritating to the unsympathetic.²¹

In the 1950s and 1960s, this contingent and implicit approach contrasted heavily with the reductionist, explicit, prescriptive, and rigid approach of U.S. strategy, a state of affairs that irritated U.S. officials who wanted the Navy to hew to the tenets of declaratory strategy. Navy leaders recognized that the Navy had to align with the administrations’ declaratory strategies at least in word, but continually balked at the administrations’ attempts to narrow the fleet’s capabilities to accord with their prescriptive declaratory policies or visions of war. Because “sea power,” as H. P. Willmott noted, “is a long term phenomenon; ships, design teams, industries, and above all experience, cannot be improvised,” Navy leaders regarded the strategic environment as more ambiguous and less certain than did the nation’s political and defense leaders.²² Navy leaders saw the Navy as a backstop against the administrations’ shortsighted policies and diplomatic miscues. As Captain J. C. Wylie noted, “We need not remain always within whatever may be the prevalent opinion of the moment.”²³

The Navy recognized that to survive politically, it had to compete with or distinguish itself from the Air Force. The quick and decisive war that was now envisioned subverted considerations of a maritime strategy and the need for an offensive sea control approach to ensure the sea-lanes to Europe remained open. In general, the shorter and more decisive the anticipated clash of arms, the more irrelevant the Navy

²¹ Geoffrey Till, “Maritime Power and the Twenty-First Century,” in *Seapower: Theory and Practice*, ed. Geoffrey Till (Portland, OR: Frank Cass, 1994), 196–197.

²² H. P. Willmott, *Sea Warfare: Weapons, Tactics and Strategy* (Chichester, UK: Antony Bird, 1981), 10.

²³ Captain J. C. Wylie, “Why a Sailor Thinks Like a Sailor,” U.S. Naval Institute *Proceedings* 83, no. 8 (August 1957): 813.

became. Seeing an opportunity to broaden U.S. strategic thinking and secure institutional relevance, CNO Arleigh Burke embedded the Navy in the policies of nuclear deterrence by constructing the ballistic missile-carrying nuclear-powered submarine (SSBN) and the submarine-launched ballistic missile, the first of which was called the Polaris.²⁴ The SSBN's mission became the Navy's primary one for the remainder of the Cold War, but it was initially a loveless marriage. Institutionally, the project was seen as a political concession to Massive Retaliation, which came at the expense of more operationally useful platforms. It was only after the idea of nuclear deterrence matured in the era of mutually assured destruction that the SSBN's attractiveness in meeting American and institutional needs became apparent.

With the SSBN, Burke established a dual-track approach. The generic flexibility track allowed the Navy to demonstrate its worth across the spectrum of force from coercive diplomacy to general war. The other track was a separate and explicit, strategic-level expression of national needs, which located the SSBN at the heart of nuclear deterrence. As the United States' only invulnerable second-strike platform, it could threaten to target Soviet society, which served as a maximum deterrent to nuclear war. However, the latter track would prove just as generic as the first. Neither pointed toward or demanded a deeper understanding of maritime power.

No period of the Cold War saw the Navy develop technology with more urgency than the 1950s. No previous generation of U.S. naval officers was better suited for this task. In the interwar period, the Navy's best, most promising officers, which included Burke, did postgraduate work in science and engineering, served multiple tours in the bureaus of Ordnance, Aeronautics, and Propulsion, and worked closely across all the warfare communities and industry. They had attended the Naval War College at a time when only the top officers were posted there. During the Second World War, they gained invaluable experience operationalizing technology. Their experiences helped overcome

²⁴ See David A. Rosenberg, "Arleigh Albert Burke," *The Chiefs of Naval Operations*, ed. Robert W. Love Jr. (Annapolis, MD: U.S. Naval Institute, 1980), 277–279.

the immense challenges of fielding a weapons system like the SSBN, which, remarkably, went from blueprint to deployment in less than five years.

However, the technological fixation had far-reaching effects. It led to early and intractable career specialization, which further narrowed the institution's knowledge base. It curtailed the cross-pollination of ideas and experiences between the three major warfare communities—surface ships, aviation, and submarines—that had been characteristic of the interwar Navy.²⁵ Understanding how to employ complex weapons systems now took up a far greater percentage of an officer's career, particularly those in the aviation and submarine communities, who had to dedicate their first three to five years to that end.²⁶ Reflecting the fanaticism of Rear Admiral Hyman G. Rickover to ensure no accidents endangered his nuclear propulsion program, submariners were (and still are) considered first and foremost nuclear engineers. They now had little room in their careers for anything other than going to sea and learning how to operate their platforms. As a result, when the submariners assumed high-level positions in the 1970s, 1980s, and 1990s, which included three CNOs whose tenures stretched from 1982–94, almost none had backgrounds in international or strategic affairs.²⁷

Technological demands changed how the Navy educated its officers. Rickover gained control over the Naval Academy's curriculum and mandated that 80 percent of every graduating class had to major in science, technology, engineering, or math.²⁸ Career paths changed at this time as well, which compounded these effects. Careers were

²⁵ David A. Rosenberg, "Process: The Realities of Formulating Modern Naval Strategy," in *Mahan is Not Enough: The Proceedings of a Conference on the Works of Sir Julian Corbett and Admiral Sir Herbert Richmond*, ed. James Goldrick and John B. Hattendorf (Newport, RI: Naval War College, 1993), 152. For recent reflections on the career paths of Navy officers, see Admiral James Stavridis and Captain Mark Hagerott, "The Heart of An Officer: Joint, Interagency, and International Operations and Navy Career Development," *Naval War College Review* 62, no. 2 (Spring 2009): 26–41 and Captain Mark Hagerott, "Consequences of Cutbacks? A Changed Officer Corps," U.S. Naval Institute *Proceedings* 137, no. 9 (September 2011), <http://www.usni.org/magazines/proceedings/2011-09/nobody-asked-me>.

²⁶ In 1954 alone, the Navy and Marine Corps lost 535 aircrew and 776 aircraft in accidents. Robert C. Rubel, "The U.S. Navy's Transition to Jets," *Naval War College Review* 63, no. 2 (Spring 2010): 52.

²⁷ Rosenberg, "Process," 153.

²⁸ John F. Lehman Jr., *Command of the Seas* (New York: C. Scribner's Sons, 1988), 25–26.

shortened, which meant less time in each rank and fewer tours. High operating tempos and chronic manning problems meant longer sea tours and less time in shore tours, all of which further constricted the officers' knowledge base.

The institution's dedication to the career paths that provided its officers with a broad knowledge base in the interwar years that had proved vital to its victory in the Pacific Campaign fell by the wayside. Fewer officers were attending the Naval War College, and fewer still of the Navy's best. Unlike the other services, higher education was no longer required for command.²⁹ There was now little time in an officer's career or inclination by the Navy's bureau of personnel to send them to a now potentially career damaging tour at the Naval War College, for example, where they could place operational experience into a broader perspective. As noted by John Lehman, the secretary of the Navy from 1981–87, "We have raised a generation of naval officers who have been well trained in technology and engineering, but of whom a great many are essentially illiterate in the conceptual disciplines and humanities."³⁰ As David Rosenberg stated, the fixation on technology "served to distract attention from, if not actively discourage serious consideration of, strategic issues and challenges."³¹

In the early 1950s, the Naval War College established a program to develop a cadre of uniformed strategic thinkers, who, it was hoped, would reprise Mahan's role as a provider of clarity in a confused period of transition.³² But that effort was short-lived. In a statement that could have been made at almost any time in the last half-century, the chief of the Navy's personnel bureau, in a letter to the president of the war college, noted that he could not send any more officers to the war college's three-year program because

Our commitments are already beyond our resources....We are operating...with a practical deficit of some 250 line captains....We

²⁹ Hattendorf, Wadleigh, and Simpson, *Sailors and Scholars*, 179–180 and 257–259.

³⁰ Lehman, *Command of the Seas*, 26.

³¹ Rosenberg, "Process," 168.

³² See Hattendorf's introduction to Wylie, *Military Strategy*, xxi–xxviii and Hattendorf, Wadleigh, and Simpson, *Sailors and Scholars*, 200–208.

are...faced with the absolute and over-riding requirement to maintain our present forces at maximum effectiveness while striving to ready our personnel for the technological advances they must cope with.³³

Navy leaders in OPNAV did not see the need for strategic education either. They believed that efforts to justify the Navy's policy arguments were of more practical value.³⁴

The Navy's reasoned responses to the Cold War's challenges established early on the rules by which the institution's intellect operated. A conservatism bred from operating advanced technology on, above, and below the unforgiving environs of the open oceans, confirmed the institution's confidence in the unique and preeminent value of experiential knowledge. The superior form of knowledge and basis of authority (and promotion) was operational experience and technical and technological know-how. Given the institution's operational and pragmatic outlook, that which was learned was limited to that which was useful operationally. Neither historical knowledge nor strategic theory helped to solve the fleet's day-to-day problems.³⁵ This goes some ways in explaining why the Navy did not seek the help of the RAND-style theorists, unlike the Air Force and Army.³⁶ Or why it did not turn to historical analysis and theory to update Mahan's theories, which were now viewed as the application of a passé deterministic historical methodology, a contrivance of a man writing in a particular period of history.³⁷ By decade's end, nothing had changed (nor would it until the late 1970s) since Wylie's

³³ Vice Admiral James L. Holloway Jr., letter to Vice Admiral Lynde D. McCormick, president of the Naval War College, April 5, 1956, quoted in Hattendorf, Wadleigh, and Simpson, *Sailors and Scholars*, 235. A "line" officer refers to those in the Navy's unrestricted line community, meaning those officers in the warfighting communities (surface warfare, aviation, submarines, and SEALs), who—unlike those in the restricted line or staff corps communities (supply officers, lawyers, chaplains, and doctors)—are eligible for operational command.

³⁴ Ibid.

³⁵ Geoffrey Till, *Seapower: A Guide for the Twenty-First Century* (London: Frank Cass, 204), 74.

³⁶ As David Rosenberg pointed out, the Cold War's most important naval innovation, the SSBN, was the brainchild not of the civilian theorists, but of Navy leaders. Rosenberg, "Process," 173.

³⁷ See John B. Hattendorf, "Recent Thinking on the Theory of Naval Strategy," *Maritime Strategy and the Balance of Power: Britain and America in the Twentieth Century*, ed. John B. Hattendorf and Robert S. Jordan (New York: St. Martin's, 1989), 137–141.

comment in 1951 that “The poverty of contemporary naval strategic thought is, I think, self-evident. The Navy, it would seem, has been unable to successfully educate the American people in the imperatives of modern naval strategy and largely because the Navy has no clear concept of just what its strategic necessities are.”³⁸

D. THE 1960S: MCNAMARA’S REVOLUTION

President John F. Kennedy’s Flexible Response was reflective of a period when a nuclear stalemate was emerging and direct conflict was moving to the margins. Now, the Soviet Union had to be contained strategically with nuclear weapons and locally with conventional forces. Kennedy rearmed with a flexible mix of conventional capabilities, which promised to elevate the Navy’s standing. But that did not happen. The administration saw the Navy’s predominant mission as nuclear deterrence. The SSBN embodied Flexible Response’s nuclear side and was fiscally supported as such, but at the expense of the Navy’s aging World War II-era surface fleet.³⁹ Given advanced Soviet weaponry, the administration thought the carriers were too vulnerable in a general war, and refused to fund any more. After attack submarines and SSBNs became the primary instruments of sea control and nuclear retaliation, respectively, the carrier’s missions narrowed to gunboat diplomacy and limited war, the kind of war that now appeared in Vietnam, where, as in the Korean War, the carriers proved their worth enough that another class of supercarriers was ordered.

In terms of U.S. strategic and naval thinking, the 1960s was a watershed. But this was not because of the Vietnam War, which was essentially a laboratory for the RAND-style theorists. Instead, it was because of Secretary of Defense Robert McNamara’s revolutionary managerial changes. With his centralized Planning, Programming, and Budgeting System process, McNamara sought not only to optimize resources by applying

³⁸ Captain J. C. Wylie, letter to Rear Admiral C. J. Moore, July 13, 1951, quoted in Hattendorf, Wadleigh, and Simpson, *Sailors and Scholars*, 201.

³⁹ In fiscal years 1961–63, the SSBN-Polaris program took up a staggering 13 percent of the Navy’s budget on average. Baer, *One Hundred Years of Sea Power*, 356.

cost-benefit-based systems analysis to compare, for example, the marginal utilities of Air Force strategic bombers and SSBNs, but also to *command* the Department of Defense.⁴⁰ He noted that his process rectified the “tendency on the part of the services to base their planning and force structure on their own unilateral views of how a future war might be fought.”⁴¹

By embedding the science of management, McNamara expanded the optimization imperative past the realm of nuclear strategy and into all aspects of U.S. strategy and defense policy. He rooted an intellectual outlook that was obsessed not with understanding, but with providing answers in the form of quantitative analyses—the new coin of the realm. His was an industrial-manager’s approach, which concerned itself more with the efficient allocation of resources than with the relating of *ways, means, and ends*. As one high-level administration official later noted, McNamara’s approach was apolitical—it did not focus on “*political problems* of the goods of war, but how to marry modes of warfare to conflict dominated by new technologies.”⁴²

The increasing costs and complexity of weaponry and the Services’ egregious self-serving behavior demanded some kind of managerial revolution. But the one implemented was non-negotiable, and for the Navy counter-cultural. The Navy struggled to adapt more than the Army and the Air Force, each of which—unlike the Navy—believed that success in their respective operating medium depended upon centralizing authority and the ability of large staffs to devise prescriptive and tightly managed campaign plans. For the Navy, which opposed centralizing authority and large staffs in

⁴⁰ Jerry L. McCaffery and L. R. Jones, *Budgeting and Financial Management for National Defense* (Greenwich, CT: Information Age, 2004), 89 and 92. Program budgeting means organizing capital expenditures into functional programs like the *Sturgeon*-class fast attack submarine rather than budget line-items spread over different programs. This is done to facilitate comparative analysis and policy decisions.

⁴¹ Secretary of Defense Robert S. McNamara, testimony to the U.S. House of Representatives, Armed Services Committee, *Statement of Secretary of Defense Robert S. McNamara on the Fiscal Year 1963–67 Defense Program and 1963 Defense Budget*, 87th Congress, 2nd Session, January 24, 1962, quoted in Richard E. Hegmann, “In Search of Strategy: The Navy and the Depths of the Maritime Strategy” (PhD dissertation, Brandeis University, 1991), 385.

⁴² Deputy National Security Advisor Carl Kaysen (1961–63), interview by Bruce Kuklick, March 27, 2004, quoted in Kuklick, *Blind Oracles*, 20. Emphasis added.

principle, the Second World War and the Korean War demonstrated that success at sea depended upon a decentralized command structure and considerable delegation of individual responsibility. As CNO Burke noted, “We believe in *command*, not *staff*. We believe we have ‘real’ things to do...[i.e., the Navy isn’t a force in garrison like the Army and Air Force]....We decentralize and capitalize on the capabilities of our individual people rather than centralize and make automatons of them.”⁴³

But centralized authority also made it easier for the secretary of defense to organize the military around a certain concept or vision of future war. Reflecting the Navy’s contingent outlook, Wylie noted, “Nothing would be more dangerous to our nation than the comfortable and placid acceptance of a single idea, a single and exclusively dominant military pattern of thought.”⁴⁴ Instead, the Navy wanted a pluralistic decision-making arrangement, which allowed a full airing of the Services’ viewpoints.⁴⁵ Run by civilians whose knowledge of naval matters was sparse at best, a monistic structure would restrict the naval voice.

Navy leaders also scorned McNamara’s scientific approach. As noted by CNO George Anderson Jr. (1961–63), the purpose of systems analysis was to moderate experience, not to replace it.⁴⁶ From the Navy’s perspective, the purpose of a decision-making structure was to make sound decisions, not to make decisions more efficiently arrived at. Unlike the Air Force, the Navy did not use systems analysis to measure its strategic effects and rationalize its purpose, but rather as a tool to solve tactical problems, a discipline the Navy itself had developed during the Second World War to great effect, which was called operational analysis. The assumption that quantifiable analysis trumped

⁴³ Admiral Arleigh A. Burke, letter to Rear Admiral Walter G. Schindler, May 14, 1958, quoted in Rosenberg, “Arleigh Albert Burke,” 287. Emphasis in the original.

⁴⁴ Wylie, “Why a Sailor Thinks Like a Sailor,” 811.

⁴⁵ Jeffrey G. Barlow, *From Hot War to Cold: The U.S. Navy and National Security Affairs, 1945–1955* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University, 2009), 87 and 89.

⁴⁶ Lawrence Korb, “George Whalen Anderson Jr.,” in *The Chiefs of Naval Operations*, ed. Robert W. Love Jr. (Annapolis, MD: U.S. Naval Institute, 1980), 324.

experience stuck in the craw of many Navy officers, particularly Anderson, who took McNamara's rationalist approach to task while testifying before Congress.

The McNamara revolution profoundly changed the CNO's role. In the 1950s, the CNO's job was strategic, operational, conceptual, and long-term. He assessed the strategic environment, established a strategic approach (however implicit), developed long-term resource plans, and commanded the fleet.⁴⁷ The CNO had authority over the main elements of naval strategy—the fleet, OPNAV, and, to an extent, the independent materiel-oriented bureaus. All that changed in the 1960s. The CNO, who had lost much legitimacy institutionally when the 1958 Defense Reorganization Act stripped him of operational command of the fleet, now had far less control over OPNAV. Much of OPNAV now answered to McNamara's staff, the Office of the Secretary of Defense (OSD), on its constant programming and budget demands. Those answers hewed more to parochial warfare community concerns than to the CNO's guidance, the latter of which could be outlasted given the long-term nature of such programs and the CNOs' relatively short tenures. As CNO David L. McDonald (1963–67) noted, “When I was CNO, I often felt that I had no more authority than a lieutenant commander.”⁴⁸

Secretary McNamara's changes meant that the Navy's institutional health was now in the hands of those slide-rule wielding program officers in OPNAV whose analyses now determined and rationalized the Navy's resource decisions. The Navy had to work much harder to defend those decisions, as OSD policy makers were highly critical of them, believing the Navy's decisions lacked analytical rigor. As McNamara himself acknowledged, the worth of the Navy's general-purpose fleet and platforms was much harder to quantify than those of ground or tactical air forces.⁴⁹ Ironically, OSD

⁴⁷ Thomas C. Hone, *Power and Change: The Administrative History of the Office of the Chief of Naval Operations, 1946–1986* (Washington, DC: Naval Historical Center, 1989), 51–53.

⁴⁸ Admiral David L. McDonald, U.S. Navy (Ret.), interview by John T. Mason Jr., 1976, U.S. Naval Institute Oral History, quoted in Hone, *Power and Change*, 129.

⁴⁹ Hegmann, “In Search of Strategy,” 405.

could not quantify the types of flexible capabilities that Flexible Response called for the most.

The CNO's job was now programmatic, administrative, mechanical, and short-term. The Navy had no choice. The essential means to defend the institution's identity, preferred weapons systems, and relevance was now through OSD's Planning, Programming, and Budgeting System. For a service whose worth after the Second World War was rarely self-evident, the Navy had to protect itself where it had always been the most vulnerable—not on the high seas, but in the appointed offices where decisions about American defense policy were made.⁵⁰ As N.A.M. Rodger noted, “foreigners come and go, but the [Navy's] real enemies are always in Washington.”⁵¹ The focus of OPNAV—85 percent of whose billets were now dedicated to programming and budgeting—shifted as well.⁵² As one internal memo noted, “Practically the entire OPNAV organization is tuned, like a tuning fork, to the vibrations of the budgetary process....There is a vast preoccupation with budgetary matters.”⁵³

Secretary McNamara's changes reshaped the Navy's career paths as well. In the 1940s, the path to promotion to admiral went through OPNAV's war planning directorate. In the 1950s, it went through CNO Burke's long-range strategic planning directorate. Starting in the 1960s, it changed to managing weapons systems programs and manpower—and has not changed since. The already constricted backgrounds of those ascending to leadership positions narrowed even more. In the 1960s, the aviation and submarine communities, which would come to dominate the Navy's leadership positions in the 1970s, 1980s, and 1990s, produced their first generation of flag officers, the products of severe career specialization and little or no strategic education. As Rosenberg noted, now

⁵⁰ Gray, “Seapower for Containment,” 188.

⁵¹ N.A.M. Rodger, introduction to *Naval Power in the Twentieth Century*, xxi.

⁵² Lehman, *Command of the Seas*, 128.

⁵³ OPNAV Fleet Operations (OP-03G), memo to Director, Navy Program Planning (OP-090), September 23, 1970, quoted in Hone, *Power and Change*, 86.

Most of the Navy's flag officers came late to the more sublime aspects of their profession, and thus approached strategy not from a theoretical or historical perspective, but from a more narrow operational one, based on their own experience at sea in their warfare specialties, and with a technological and programmatic orientation built on recent Washington budget battles.⁵⁴

Yet, neither operational, technical, nor programmatic experience required a deeper understanding of the Navy's purpose.

E. THE 1970S: THE NAVY'S COLD WAR NADIR

In the 1970s, a period known as "détente," U.S. presidents sought to reduce superpower tensions, promote stability, and shape a more predictable relationship with the Soviets. The Soviet Union was at the height of its prestige, power, and global presence. It had reached nuclear parity and its version of modernity was attracting fans worldwide. With an ever-growing, far-ranging, and highly capable fleet designed for nuclear retaliation and sea denial, the Soviets were challenging the United States for control of the seas. For the first time in the Cold War, the Navy had a bona fide rival at sea, which should have helped its cause, but did not.

Ostensibly, the United States' de-emphasis of the nuclear option meant an emphasis on general war, which meant the Navy had to be ready to protect the sea-lanes to NATO Europe. But the SSBN-Polaris program and the Vietnam War had devoured the funds needed to replace the obsolescent World War II-era ships that would protect the lanes in the face of a one-to-three ratio of U.S.-to-Soviet attack submarines. CNO Elmo R. "Bud" Zumwalt Jr. (1970–74) bluntly told his superiors that should war come, the Navy would not be able to keep the sea-lanes open.⁵⁵ The fleet did not have enough ships. (See Appendix for the numbers of U.S. ships from 1948–2009.) The fleet was ill-manned, trained, and equipped. Morale was at rock bottom. Zumwalt saw the need and opportunity to reorganize the Navy around the Soviet sea-denial threat. He sought to

⁵⁴ Rosenberg, "Process," 153.

⁵⁵ Elmo R. Zumwalt Jr., *On Watch: A Memoir* (New York: Quadrangle, 1976), 337–338.

rebalance the fleet, elevate sea control's standing, and limit the influence of the carrier aviators, who, from his perspective, did not understand that limited wars were now passé. He argued for a "high-low" mix: "high" being franchised high-end platforms like carriers and submarines and "low" meaning large numbers of low-cost, low-tech defensive sea control ships.

To gain support for his vision, Zumwalt, a surface officer, released his *Project SIXTY* in 1970, the Navy's first declaratory strategic statement. With this new tool of governance, Zumwalt sought to regain control over OPNAV and provide a conceptual framework for the fleet. Its pedagogic companion, *The Missions of the U.S. Navy*, was released in 1974. Its author, Vice Admiral Stansfield M. Turner, who did much to redress the Navy's intellectual shortcomings, sought to get naval officers to think deeply about the Navy's purpose. His was the Cold War Navy's first attempt to address the inchoate state of sea power theory. Turner organized what he saw as the Navy's four principal missions—1) strategic deterrence; 2) forward presence; 3) sea control; and 4) power projection—into a simple and insightful construct. While it proved influential more outside than inside the service, Turner's "theory" of naval purpose was simply its practice. Unlike American strategic thinking, American naval thinking did not suffer from excessive theorizing, just the opposite—it was merely descriptive and un-analytical.

But Zumwalt's plan failed. The low-end part fell victim to inflation. Of the four classes of ships proposed, only one, a patrol frigate, was built in numbers. By 1975, the fleet numbered only 512 ships, nearly half of what it was four years earlier.⁵⁶ Zumwalt's plan ignited a fierce, decade-long debate inside the Navy. While the tension between sea control and carrier-based power projection had ebbed and flowed throughout the Cold War, the emerging Soviet naval threat and the need to recapitalize the fleet in a period of fiscal austerity brought about a reappraisal of naval strategy, which meant making hard decisions on sea control versus power projection capabilities.

⁵⁶ Ronald O'Rourke, "Navy Force Structure and Shipbuilding Plans: Background and Issues for Congress" (Washington, DC: Congressional Research Service, October 2, 2008), 28.

Sea control advocates like Zumwalt saw the Navy's purpose more narrowly in terms of general war and the enormous stakes that it would involve should it come again. To them, the Navy's purpose resided in its wartime role of keeping the sea-lanes open, which is how the Army and Air Force, dependent upon open sea-lanes for logistical support, saw that purpose. In essence, these advocates argued against the Pacific War's style of warfare and for the one that won the Battle of the North Atlantic in World War II, which did not require a broadly capable fleet or Marines to seize territory.⁵⁷ From their perspective, a fleet structured along the lines of those that had enabled victory over Germany in two world wars provided the highest quality of deterrence against a Soviet invasion of Europe.

In contrast, power-projection proponents like CNOs James L. Holloway III (1974–78) and Thomas B. Hayward (1978–82), both carrier aviators, wanted a fleet with broad and flexible warfighting capabilities designed to deter war and prevail in a wide variety of circumstances across the spectrum of warfare. Zumwalt's vision, which was based on a certain view of the future, promised to narrow the fleet's capabilities. As Holloway's *Sea Plan 2000* noted, "In planning for the long term, hedges against what is not known cannot be neglected."⁵⁸

The primary hedge was of course the carrier, the Navy's most versatile instrument. Its repertoire of missions included presence, humanitarian relief, coercive diplomacy, limited war, local and open-ocean sea control, sea control via power projection, nuclear deterrence, and crisis management. Excepting the SSBN, it was the most powerful warship afloat. It was much faster than its escorts, and could carry an enormous amount of just about anything—fuel, bombs, weapons systems, and humanitarian relief supplies, for example. No task force of surface combatants could

⁵⁷ See Eric Grove and Geoffrey Till, "Anglo-American Maritime Strategy, 1945–60," in *Maritime Strategy and the Balance of Power*, ed. John B. Hattendorf and Robert S. Jordan (New York: St. Martin's, 1989), 281–282.

⁵⁸ "Sea Plan 2000," in *U.S. Naval Strategy in the 1970s: Selected Documents*, ed. John B. Hattendorf, Newport Paper 30 (Newport, RI: Naval War College, 2007), 119.

match its capabilities or coercive diplomatic impact. The carrier, which has a service life equivalent to twelve presidential terms, was the primary hedge against the political unknown as well. As Gray noted,

Although (say) twenty-five years is a long time for people...and modern weapons systems, it is almost an eternity in politics. Changes in the global security environment, and policy decisions in response, can move at a speed not remotely approachable by sympathetic alternations in force structure.⁵⁹

With the carrier's capacious capabilities, the Navy was able to find handholds in the administrations' ever-shifting declaratory strategies and across a range of strategic and general war plans. Serving the day-to-day needs of U.S. statecraft brought front-page empirics, which did much to compensate for the Navy's lack of a theoretical vision or inclusion in those declaratory strategies. A carrier-based fleet accommodated shifts in the strategic and domestic political environs more effectively than one specialized for sea control, for example. The carrier was the generic flexibility strategy made manifest, the ultimate expression of the institutional demand for operational and political adaptability. However, the debate could not be resolved because national policies did not provide the necessary guidance and funding. Regardless of the Soviet naval threat, for the United States, the 1970s was a grim decade in which military sufficiency had to suffice.

Things went from bad to worse under President James E. "Jimmy" Carter Jr. Carter did not want to be put in a position in which the United States would have to respond to a Soviet invasion of Western Europe with nuclear weapons, particularly because this might escalate to all-out nuclear war. Nor did he believe that such a war would necessarily spread beyond Europe. To deter the Soviets, he bulked up U.S. conventional land and air forces in Central Europe to defend what was the locus of geopolitical, military, and political attention in the Cold War—the Central Front in West Germany.⁶⁰ Funding a global, power-projecting Navy only enervated the deterrent

⁵⁹ Gray, *Explorations in Strategy*, 113.

⁶⁰ Baer, *One Hundred Years of Sea Power*, 412–415.

quality of U.S. European-based forces. Carter demanded that the Navy adapt Zumwalt's defensive sea control vision, and cut its five-year shipbuilding program from 159 ships to 70.⁶¹ Carter, a 1946 Naval Academy graduate, elected not to take advantage of the Navy's prominent and unique global power projection capability. Instead, he focused U.S. and allied strategy on where the West's position had always been the weakest—in the conventional match-up against the Warsaw Pact army in Central Europe.

Given a foreign policy that eschewed limited war, the Navy's purpose boiled down to escorting convoys in a time of war. And even that was suspect. Few Americans understood that their European allies saw the NATO alliance as more of a political guarantee than a means to organize for actual defense.⁶² As Gray noted,

European leaders neither believed that the nonnuclear defense of NATO-Europe was feasible nor wished it to be so....Indeed, the very prospect of relatively early failure on the ground provided the critical fuel for Soviet anxiety over NATO's propensity to exercise its nuclear escalatory options. It is no exaggeration to claim that there was intended to be deterrent success in a Soviet estimation of NATO's failure in conventional defense.⁶³

If a Soviet invasion was not answered with a nuclear response, Warsaw Pact forces would reach the Atlantic before the bulk of U.S. forces could make the transit. So the Navy was irrelevant either way.

Navy officers were despondent over the institution's marginalized status. The Navy had little control over the forces that made all but its nuclear deterrent capabilities irrelevant. But Navy leaders refused to accept Carter's tentative and defensive outlook and doggedly held on to the institution's more independent worldview. In strategic statements like *Sea Plan 2000* (1978) and *The Future of U.S. Sea Power* (1979), the Navy finally offered sophisticated geopolitical arguments that attacked the underlying assumptions of U.S. strategy that had subverted its interests in all but the last decade of

⁶¹ Robert W. Love Jr., *History of the U.S. Navy*, 2 vols., vol. II 1942–1991 (Harrisburg, PA: Stackpole, 1992), 679.

⁶² Gray, "Seapower for Containment," 189.

⁶³ *Ibid.*, 190–191.

the Cold War. At last, the Navy was starting to “think” strategically. But it was only because the institution found itself in a cul de sac where the only exit meant handing over its identity.

The Navy was vindicated soon enough. In response to the fundamentalist Islamic takeover of Iran and the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, Carter sent U.S. naval forces into the region en masse, doubling the U.S. naval presence in 1979 and quadrupling it in 1980, which would have been nearly impossible had he obtained the kind of fleet that his administration had wanted.

F. THE 1980S: THE NAVY’S COLD WAR ZENITH

President Ronald W. Reagan rejected the assumption that the Soviet Union and the Cold War were permanent fixtures. He sought not to contain the Soviet Union or rebalance power, but to win the Cold War outright. Since the utility of nuclear weapons had diminished due to their sheer numbers, Reagan’s rearmament focused on rehabilitating the capabilities required to support an activist policy of Third World interventions and gunboat diplomacy, a strategy of global and protracted war, and deterring nuclear war. Unlike previous administrations, Reagan’s did not assume that Europe was the decisive theater or that war would be short and decisive. All this meant a restoration of the Navy’s conventional capabilities and for the first time in the Cold War, strategic parity with the Air Force and the Army.

The Navy’s thinking cohered and was finally made manifest in its *Maritime Strategy*. The *Maritime Strategy* was a decade-long series of mostly classified strategic statements that constituted a body of thought about the Navy’s purpose.⁶⁴ It was a means both of forging institutional consensus (at which it was highly successful), and of shifting

⁶⁴ The *Maritime Strategy* was a series of work-in-progress secret-level briefs and publications written from 1982 to 1990. See John B. Hattendorf and Peter M. Swartz, eds. *U.S. Naval Strategy in the 1980s: Selected Documents*. Newport Paper 33 (Newport RI: U.S. Naval War College, 2008) and John B. Hattendorf, *The Evolution of the U.S. Navy’s Maritime Strategy, 1977–1986*, Newport Paper 19 (Newport, RI: U.S. Naval War College, 2004). Also available online at <http://www.usnwc.edu/Publications/Naval-War-College-Press/Newport-Papers/Documents/19-pdf.aspx>.

the strategic debate at the national level (at which it was less so). It aligned the Navy's operational, programmatic, administrative, intelligence, and pedagogic activities. It successfully marketed the Navy's strategic approach, weapons systems preferences, and goal of a 600-ship Navy. Under Reagan, the fleet grew from 477 to 566 ships, an average of 17 per year.⁶⁵ Moreover, it revived and reenergized the institution.

The *Maritime Strategy* could not be fulfilled until a set of trends presented an opportunity that the Navy was finally intellectually prepared to seize. To help find a way out of its cul de sac, Navy leaders had established a cadre of well-educated officers-as-strategic-thinkers in the late 1970s, most of whom served in OPNAV's Strategy and Policy Division between sea tours, where they developed the *Maritime Strategy*. They realized that Reagan provided an indulgent budgetary environment, and, given the lack of a formalized national strategy, that the Navy could define its own strategic direction. Along with Reagan's assumptions about the nature of a conflict with the Soviets, two developments—the introduction of high-tech U.S. naval defensive weapons systems and intelligence that Soviet attack submarines would protect Soviet SSBNs in their patrol bastions near the Soviet Union and would not sally forth to shut down the sea-lanes—resurrected the carrier's role in general war and with it an offensive sea control strategy.

The *Maritime Strategy*, which was more a heuristic device than an actual war plan, had three phases: 1) Deterrence or the Transition to War saw U.S. naval forces deter war and, failing that, transition seamlessly to global war; 2) Seizing the Initiative meant seizing control of the seas by destroying Soviet naval forces; and 3) Carrying the Fight to the Enemy was about attacking the Soviet homeland and destroying Soviet SSBNs. By threatening to turn the conflict into a protracted global war that brought to bear the Free World's immense production capabilities, the *Maritime Strategy* sought to deter Soviet aggression and backstop the decisions of leaders from the United States, NATO Europe, the U.S. Air Force, and the U.S. Army, all of who never gave much thought about what to do should a U.S.-Soviet clash of arms resolve itself into a protracted conventional war.

⁶⁵ O'Rourke, "Navy Force Structure and Shipbuilding Plans," 28–29.

The *Maritime Strategy* was a maritime strategy as classically understood, correctly locating as it did the West's center of gravity off-shore. But it was one that functioned as such only in a time of hot war. Although it focused heavily on the fleet's peacetime effects, the *Maritime Strategy* did not escape the verities of American Cold War thinking, to which deterrence and warfighting were central and the system and its importance were largely ancillary.

In the absence of more fulfilling victories at sea, the *Maritime Strategy* was the climatic experience of the late Cold War Navy, the more so because of the abrupt end of the conflict that had inspired its creation, which effectively sent it to the dustbin untested, except at the level of procurement, which, for the Navy, was always the most gratifying phase of any strategic initiative. The *Maritime Strategy* was thus less a moment of clarity, and more the arrival of the Navy at the far end of the cul de sac created by its determination to find a way into the fight with the Soviet Union and into U.S. strategy—from which it was released not by its own further strategic reflection, but simply by the Soviet collapse, which would confront the Navy once more with a blank sheet of paper.

G. CONCLUSION

The logic inherent in U.S. strategy worked against a maritime-systemic strategic approach. Even though such an approach was well-suited to a state whose interests have always been linked to the growth of the global economy, and to the open societies and democratic politics that have thus accompanied sustained economic success, the United States' approach was more characteristic of a continental power, one that relied heavily on air power to enable victories through decisive battle. The nuclear bomb had obviated the need for the United States to develop skills in diplomacy, rendered many of the tasks of systemic management much easier, and hindered understanding of how to manage a liberal international system to greater strategic effect.⁶⁶ As Gray noted, the United States

⁶⁶ Gray, "Strategy in the Nuclear Age," 582–584.

“is neither a natural sea power nor does a maritime perspective and precepts dominate its strategic culture....The American way of war has been quintessentially continentalist.”⁶⁷

The logic inherent in American naval thinking was not any more conducive to a maritime strategy’s development. The Navy had framed its purpose not in terms of the “systemic Mahan,” who, as a maritime theorist and political economist, had argued that the naval forces of liberal states had uniquely shaped the history of nations and peoples by spreading the benefits derived from expanding markets and open societies. Instead, the Navy defined itself in terms of the “battle-centric Mahan.” The Navy’s contingent outlook, adaptable mindset, and flexible fleet structure, which were vindicated throughout the Cold War—imminently designed as they were for the near-constant changes in the strategic, operational, and domestic political environs—may be considered Mahan’s legacy. The rationality and assumptions of the battle-centric Navy ensured that its officers were virtuosos in the operational art, always tactically and technologically proficient, and adapting to new scenarios with comparative ease. With that route, however, came a historical naiveté and inaptitude in strategic thought of the kind required to understand the Navy’s broader purpose in light of the United States’ liberal, open-market system and to form meaningful arguments in relation to competing forms of U.S. military power, mainly the Air Force and Army. With that embedded perspective, the Navy steamed into the uncharted waters of the post-Cold War era.

⁶⁷ Ibid., 594.

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III. A MARITIME STRATEGY FOR THE 1990S, 1989

A. BUSH AND THE “VISION THING”

When the Berlin Wall fell in November 1989, President George H. W. Bush refused to “dance” on the Wall.¹ He reacted with characteristic caution to the announcement that the Soviet army was withdrawing from Central Europe and that its government would propose sweeping cuts in conventional and nuclear arms.² Perhaps aware that Russian history abounds with reformers that turned into dictators or were subsequently swallowed by revolution, Bush moved tentatively in dealing with the Soviets.³ His administration saw as its primary purpose not to lay out a new strategic approach for the post-Cold war era, but to manage a successful end to the long confrontation with the Soviets. The president and his inner circle were deeply schooled in the ways of the Cold War. They had been students and stewards of containment. They were a profoundly pragmatic group, more comfortable with managing subtle rather than tectonic change. They were in no hurry to look further, a task for which they were ill suited by both background and temperament. As he acknowledged, Bush was not comfortable with what he called the “vision thing.”⁴

B. POWELL RESTRUCTURES THE STRATEGY-MAKING PROCESS

Meanwhile, Army General Colin L. Powell, the new chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, was turning the Pentagon’s decision-making process on its head and revolutionizing the process by which U.S. strategy was determined. He used the authority

¹ George Bush and Brent Scowcroft, *A World Transformed* (New York: Knopf, 1998), 149.

² Alan Riding, “After the Summit: Bush Says Soviets Merit West’s Help to Foster Reform,” *New York Times*, December 5, 1989.

³ Derek H. Chollet and James M. Goldgeier, *America between the Wars, 11/9 to 9/11: The Misunderstood Years between the Fall of the Berlin Wall and the Start of the War on Terror* (New York: BBS Public Affairs, 2008), 2 and Norman Friedman, *The Fifty-Year War: Conflict and Strategy in the Cold War* (Annapolis, MD: U.S. Naval Institute, 2000), 481.

⁴ See Bush and Scowcroft, *World Transformed*, 16–18.

established by the Goldwater-Nichols Defense Reorganization Act of 1986 to centralize strategy making to a far greater degree, which gave him more control over the direction of U.S. strategy. He wanted foremost to ensure the Pentagon maintained control of the post-Cold War drawdown of the military in the face of vociferous congressional demands for a “peace dividend.”⁵ Letting Congress manage the drawdown via budget cuts meant the resulting force would determine strategy instead of the other way around. Powell’s priority, broadly speaking, was to ensure that congressional demands for a peace dividend did not indiscriminately trample on the dictates of strategic rationality or the existing institutional balance among the Services.

To redress the perceived failings of the Vietnam War and inter-service rivalry, Goldwater-Nichols had increased the authority of the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. Among other reasons, this was to ensure secretaries of defense like Robert McNamara or even presidents did not brush aside the advice of the military’s top uniformed leader—the chairman of the Joint Chiefs. Congress assumed the advice of the service chiefs, who, along with the chairman, made up the Joint Chiefs, was colored by competing organizational interests and obscured by consensus. Goldwater-Nichols made the chairman the “principal military advisor” to the president. No longer was the chairman merely the member of the Joint Chiefs that conveyed the Joint Chiefs’ collective decisions to the White House. He was now a power to be reckoned with.

Goldwater-Nichols had also sought to reduce the Services’ power over their own respective resource decisions. The chairman was made responsible for providing “strategic direction.” He was to integrate and prioritize the CINCs’ requirements and ensure that they were properly resourced. If the Services’ budget submissions and program proposals did not conform to the chairman’s strategic guidance or the CINCs’ priorities, the chairman was to submit alternatives to the secretary of defense. In

⁵ Lorna S. Jaffe, *The Development of the Base Force 1989–1992* (Washington, DC: Joint History Office, Office of the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, July 1993), 19.

accordance with his expanded duties, the Joint Staff was expanded, reorganized, and placed under his direct control.

Even as the Cold War was ending then, the balance of power was shifting in the Pentagon. The new arbiters were OSD, the Joint Staff, and the CINCs. The Services were brought down a peg—their purpose was now understood to be nothing more than providers of capabilities to the CINCs.⁶ As one Navy flag officer lamented, “We’re going back to the [Secretary of Defense] McNamara days. [Secretary of Defense Richard B. “Dick”] Cheney is shifting power from the services to the defense secretary.”⁷

The strategic approach that Powell came up with focused on deterrence, forward presence, crisis management, and regional conflict (i.e., conflict with regional powers like Iran and North Korea). His force structure plan became known as the “Base Force,” which amounted to a 25 percent reduction in the military. The name denoted a floor beneath which the force structure should not be allowed to drop.⁸ Powell believed that he could not wait for guidance from the president or the secretary of defense on how to reduce the military.⁹ To him, the Planning, Programming, and Budgeting System was too unwieldy and too slow and the Services could not be trusted to respond to rapidly changing strategic and fiscal realities. Powell sought to build consensus among the service chiefs, but with Goldwater-Nichols, he did not need their approval.

Initially, Secretary Cheney did not agree with Powell’s rosy view of the future.¹⁰ He thought the world was still too indeterminate for the massive cuts that were advocated

⁶ Leslie Lewis, Roger Allen Brown, and C. Robert Roll, *Service Responses to the Emergence of Joint Decisionmaking* (Santa Monica, CA: RAND, 2001), 14.

⁷ Molly Moore and Patrick E. Tyler, “Secretary Cheney—Still the Skeptic—Grim View Complicates Task of ‘Building Down’ Defense,” *Washington Post*, March 21, 1990.

⁸ *Ibid.*, 21.

⁹ See Jaffe, *Development of the Base Force*, 11–15 and 21–22.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 18 and 35.

by Congress and indeed Powell himself.¹¹ He let the chairman continue, however.¹² Cheney wanted to protect the military from what he derisively called the “slash-and-burn” budgeting approach that was advocated by congressional Democrats who controlled both houses.¹³ To Cheney, the diminishing prospect of Soviet expansionism did nothing to reduce American commitments, which included protecting the flow of petroleum in the Middle East and defending South Korea, for example. But with cuts in the number of soldiers in the Army, those in OSD grew worried about the United States’ ability to wage war against regional powers. As noted by Under Secretary of Defense for Policy Paul D. Wolfowitz, the cuts meant that the “distance between a superpower and an aspiring regional hegemon had been greatly foreshortened.”¹⁴ To compensate for the comparative lack of manpower, OSD’s senior officials realized the military would have to field technologically advanced weapons systems and concepts.

In the end, Powell and Cheney came to share a regionally focused strategic outlook and a generic force structure that was flexible enough to be employed across a diverse set of circumstances. A single plan was approved by Bush in June 1990 and announced in August 1990. For the Navy, it meant reducing the fleet from 540 to 451 ships, which was the size of the fleet in 1977, and the number of carriers from 15 to 12.¹⁵

C. TROST REAPPLIES THE MARITIME STRATEGY

Throughout the winter and spring of 1990, CNO Carlisle A. H. Trost (1986–90) did not say much as General Powell pitched his new strategic approach and force structure to the service chiefs and the more vocal CINCs.¹⁶ Trost failed to rise to the bait

¹¹ Don M. Snider, *Strategy, Forces, and Budgets: Dominant Influences in Executive Decision Making, Post-Cold War, 1989–91* (Carlisle Barracks, PA: U.S. Army War College, Strategic Studies Institute, February 1993), unpaginated, PDF, 5 and 22.

¹² Jaffe, *Development of the Base Force*, 18 and 35.

¹³ Snider, *Strategy, Forces, and Budgets*, 22.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 18.

¹⁵ Jaffe, *Development of the Base Force*, 21.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 23.

after Powell's deliberately provocative question as to what the Navy's capital ship would be in the next century.¹⁷ Like the other service chiefs, Trost wanted to press his case with Powell in private.¹⁸ He was certainly annoyed, if not fuming, that the service chiefs should have been only marginally involved in fundamental decisions that clearly encroached on their Title 10 responsibilities to man, train, and equip their respective services. The process had been anything but pluralistic. Instead, it was a *fait accompli* orchestrated by a few select individuals and they had few authorized spokesmen.¹⁹ OSD's vaunted Planning, Programming, and Budgeting System had proven worthless as a means to organize for the future. As one chief lamented, "the planning for the defense build-down was a case of someone determining in advance what was needed, and then seeing that the result was produced."²⁰

CNO Trost did not share Powell's rosy view of the U.S.-Soviet relationship. On his trip to the Soviet Union in October 1989, Trost found that the Soviets had not stopped producing their massive *Oscar II* cruise missile-carrying nuclear submarines or their 65,000-ton aircraft carrier *Tiblisi*, which was only slightly smaller than the Navy's *Forrestal*-class supercarriers constructed in the 1950s.²¹ The Soviets were recalling their vast army from Central Europe. They were seeking to sign treaties on conventional force and nuclear ballistic missile levels. Yet, they were pressing ahead to construct a smaller, yet highly advanced fleet at an enormous cost. The Soviets also sought a treaty that guaranteed the existing naval balance, a proposal that Powell brushed aside.²²

¹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹ James J. Tritten, *Our New National Security Strategy: America Promises to Come Back* (Westport, CT: Praeger, 1992), 7 and Jaffe, *Development of the Base Force*, 23.

²⁰ Snider, *Strategy, Forces, and Budgets*, 17.

²¹ Ibid., 16.

²² General Colin L. Powell, U.S. Army, "Crystal Balls Don't Always Help," U.S. Naval Institute *Proceedings* 116, no. 5 (May 1990): 64.

Admiral Trost, who had entered the Naval Academy in 1949, thought the strategic environment created by the crumbling Soviet empire was sufficiently indeterminate to require the widest and most flexible range of capabilities available. Trost laid out his thinking in May 1990 in a lengthy article in the U.S. Naval Institute's *Proceedings*, the Navy's professional journal.²³ The article, entitled a "Maritime Strategy for the 1990s," had an assertive if not defiant tone, which reflected a Navy whose leaders were confident of their ability to manage the institution's destiny. It reflected a Navy that could stave off inevitable arguments by the Army and the Air Force, which had lost much of their rationale with the end of the Cold War, that they could do the Navy's Cold War missions of forward presence, crisis management, and regional conflict as well as, if not better, than the Navy.

In contrast to Powell, Trost asked for a measured and cautious response to what Powell perceived to be the end of the Cold War. Trost requested that the Pentagon's leaders focus on capabilities and not just intentions. "We have witnessed a declining perception of the Soviet threat...adding to the already strong desire to reduce the defense budget," he noted. As Trost warned,

We cannot, however, afford to react precipitously to the euphoria. ...We must consider a potential enemy's *capabilities* as well as his *intentions*. This is especially true for naval force planning....Political intentions can change overnight, while naval force structure, once relinquished, takes much longer to rebuild.²⁴

Trost's risk-averse approach reflected the Navy's more cautious worldview and the nature of its force structure.

Overall, Trost agreed with Powell's strategy.²⁵ He supported Powell's replacing the immense overseas structure with a forward presence approach, which consisted of

²³ Admiral Carlisle A. H. Trost, "Maritime Strategy for the 1990s," U.S. Naval Institute *Proceedings* 116, no. 5 (May 1990): 92–100.

²⁴ Trost, "Maritime Strategy for the 1990s," 92, 94, and 95. Emphasis in the original.

²⁵ Snider, *Strategy, Forces, and Budgets*, 16.

deployed forces and smaller, more mobile and flexible permanent ones. Trost noted the decreasing numbers of overseas bases, particularly in Spain, Greece and the Philippines. He noted the restriction of overflight rights even by NATO members, most notably during the U.S. air strike on Libya in 1986 that saw U.S. Air Force fighter-bombers fly a circuitous round-trip from their bases in England. In this context, U.S. naval forces could demonstrate U.S. resolve and perform various types of missions without raising politically sensitive and time-consuming questions of territorial sovereignty.

However, Trost believed that Powell and Cheney did not grasp the scale of naval forces needed to fulfill the missions of presence, crisis response, and limited (i.e., regional) conflict.²⁶ With his article, Trost was seeking to influence the thinking of those that did not grasp or appreciate the Navy's utility in bringing about international stability and managing crises, roles which continued despite the end of the Cold War. "I was determined to maintain our posture at a level which would permit us to meet our continuing mission responsibilities," he noted.²⁷ But it was not just the fleet's size that the CNO sought to maintain, but its composition as well. Trost was not prepared simply to accept the Joint Staff's judgments about the types and number of ships required.

Clearly, Powell was among those that did not fully "understand" or "appreciate" the Navy's continuing roles. Powell had an incomplete understanding of the Navy.²⁸ None of the operational units that he served in, particularly those later in his career, could be considered joint. His limited exposure to the other services meant that his knowledge of the Navy was acquired in the context of his student tour at the National Defense University and the bureaucratic battles waged during his considerable time in

²⁶ Ibid., 16–17.

²⁷ Admiral Carlisle A. H. Trost, U.S. Navy (Ret.), letter to John Hattendorf, September 2, 2007, quoted in John B. Hattendorf's introduction to "Maritime Strategy for the 1990s," in *U.S. Naval Strategy in the 1980s: Selected Documents*, ed. John B. Hattendorf and Peter M. Swartz, Newport Paper 33 (Newport, RI: Naval War College, 2008), 309. For another example of his thinking, see Admiral Carlisle A. H. Trost, "Requirements Drive Navy Force Levels," U.S. Naval Institute *Proceedings* 115, no. 5 (May 1989): 34–38.

²⁸ Captain Peter M. Swartz, U.S. Navy (Ret.), discussion with the author, June 19, 2009, Alexandria, VA. (Swartz was special assistant to Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff General Colin Powell, U.S. Army, 1990–92.)

Washington. According to Powell, the Army and the Air Force were in for the greatest cuts, since they had based their rationales on the battle for the Central Front in Europe and on nuclear deterrence. Nor did they possess the invulnerable ballistic-missile submarine. Revealing a rather narrow, Army-centric view of the Navy's role in the Cold War, Powell asserted that

The Navy was next in line for a substantial whack, since its major mission was to protect the Atlantic sea-lanes so that we could get to Europe to fight World War III. Part of the rationale for the Navy's aircraft carriers was to project power ashore against an invading Red Army, a role fast becoming obsolete.²⁹

Powell did not understand the nature of the Navy's thinking during the Cold War. He did not understand the reasons for the Navy's generic operational flexibility approach, which should not be surprising as the Navy had failed to articulate it. This lack of understanding was demonstrated with Powell's desire to establish a new defense structure that consisted of a Strategic Force (i.e., the Strategic Command, which would be established in June 1992), an Atlantic Force, a Pacific Force, and a Contingency Force. The latter was envisioned as a large force, not unlike the U.S.-based Rapid Deployment Joint Task Force formed in the late 1970s to blunt Soviet incursions into the Persian Gulf. He testified that the permanent "heavy corps" should be maintained in Europe, and be merged with the U.S. Atlantic Fleet to form the Atlantic Force. In his words, "We need an Atlantic Force to help achieve stability and deal with contingencies on and across that broad ocean, in Europe and the Middle East."³⁰ This was a remarkable statement, which prompted retired Rear Admiral J. C. Wylie to respond, "This is a task that, except in continental Europe itself, the Navy and Marine Corps have been carrying out quite satisfactory ever since World War II."³¹

²⁹ Colin L. Powell and Joseph E. Persico, *My American Journey* (New York: Ballantine, 1996), 425.

³⁰ Rear Admiral J. C. Wylie, U.S. Navy (Ret.), "Heads Up, Navy," U.S. Naval Institute *Proceedings* 117, no. 5 (May 1991): 17.

³¹ *Ibid.*

Admiral Trost pointed out that despite the ebbing of the Cold War, the fleet was still faced with dangers posed by the proliferation of advanced weaponry by nations whose economies did not allow them to construct their own. He noted that forty-one Third World nations around the world possessed over 250 attack submarines, one hundred of which had anti-ship cruise missiles.³² Many of these nations were anti-Western, and situated astride maritime transit routes that threatened U.S. and allied interests and U.S. naval forces with sea- and land-based capabilities. Harkening back to the sea control-power projection battle of the 1970s, Trost noted that “Survival...requires advanced electronics and weapon systems and does not allow the luxury of ‘low-mix’ platforms. The ‘hi-tech,’ advanced military capability of the world’s nations is underscored by the British experience in the South Atlantic and our own in the Persian Gulf.”³³

In the article, Trost used the *Maritime Strategy* to assert the Navy’s comparative relevance in the United States’ new strategic approach and to protect the fleet’s forward posture and composition. Like many of its developers, Trost was dismayed by misconceptions about the *Maritime Strategy*, particularly the assumption on the part of the other services and Congress that the *Maritime Strategy* was nothing more than a campaign plan that addressed the Soviet threat and that the Navy’s purpose was conceived solely in those terms. “We must also keep in mind that the Navy’s role around the world has a focus that isn’t only Soviet-oriented, and never has been,” he noted.³⁴ To Trost, the *Maritime Strategy* was about how the Navy supported worldwide U.S. interests. It was about applying non-kinetic and kinetic force across the spectrum of warfare, from presence to global war. It was not a strategy or a doctrine-driven operational concept like the Army’s and Air Force’s *AirLand Battle*, which addressed

³² Trost, “Maritime Strategy for the 1990s,” 94.

³³ Ibid. Trost was referring to the Falkland Islands War in 1982, which saw the Royal Navy lose two ships to the advanced Exocet anti-ship missile, and the attack on the USS *Stark* in May 1987 by an Iraqi jet that launched two Exocets, killing thirty-seven crewmembers and nearly sinking the ship.

³⁴ Fred H. Rainbow and Fred L. Schultz, “Interview: Admiral Carlisle A. H. Trost, Chief of Naval Operations,” U.S. Naval Institute *Proceedings* 116, no. 6 (June 1990): 69.

how to fight a specific battle on a specific battlefield against a specific threat. Trost noted that the *Maritime Strategy* was not a war plan, but a concept of operations that was based on deterrence, forward defense, and a global network of alliances.³⁵

Admiral Trost asserted that the Navy had a unique and important role in bringing about international stability and the economic benefits derived from it, which did not alter much with the end of the Soviet Union. From his perspective, the Navy—in contrast to the Air Force and the Army—had a purpose that went beyond fighting battles. He noted that the United States was an island nation. It was the leader of a global network of maritime-based alliances that linked a vast array of political and economic interests among its allies and trading partners. “Global economic interdependence is a fact of life,” he stated, fifteen years before the Pentagon released any strategic statement that admitted to a relationship between U.S. security and the global interdependent system. “The majority of our trade routes, our economic and political lifelines, are oceanic. Over 70% of our total trade by value and 99.7% of our overseas export and import tonnage move by sea. Our economic well-being has been made possible by and depends upon political stability.”³⁶

The CNO also pointed out the Navy’s preeminent role in managing crises. Since President Truman, U.S. naval forces had been the presidents’ “military force of choice.” Since 1945, naval forces had been involved in more than 200 crises, which amounted to 80 percent of the total for the U.S. military. Since 1980, presidents had turned to naval forces during crises almost 50 times, almost none dealing with the U.S.-Soviet confrontation.³⁷ He also pointed out that with the continuing importance of the Persian Gulf and the movement toward political and military multi-polarity and expanding counter-narcotics efforts (a key element of U.S. policy in the late 1980s and early 1990s),

³⁵ Trost, “Maritime Strategy for the 1990s,” 92–93.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, 93.

³⁷ Admiral Carlisle A. H. Trost, “Army Doesn’t Have to Compete With Marines; Why We Need a Navy,” letter to the editor, *New York Times*, January 1, 1990.

the Navy's tasking would increase. "Overseas regional powers, terrorists, and drug smugglers would be bolstered rather than deterred were we to withdraw naval forces from forward positions and to operate closer to home ports in the United States," he wrote. "Being present in the immediate region enables naval forces to provide a timely response at the outset of future crises."³⁸ "Consequently," Trost summed up, "only by maintaining a balanced fleet that is forward deployed and combat ready can we fulfill the role of providing regional stability while preserving U.S. economic and foreign policy interests."³⁹

D. TROST AND THE WORTH OF THE MARITIME STRATEGY

Having seen first-hand the intellectual and material investment that went into the *Maritime Strategy*, Admiral Trost was not about to jettison the strategy without a fight. With it, the Navy had provided a compelling rationale that reflected the Navy's identity, aligned its operational, programmatic, administrative, intelligence, and pedagogic activities, and supported arguments for a large and modernized fleet, all of which was now conceivably at risk with the end of the Cold War.

As the director of Navy Program Planning (OP-090) for almost four years in the early 1980s, Trost had, in real terms, built the 600-ship navy.⁴⁰ As the commander of the U.S. Atlantic Fleet, he had worked to operationalize the *Maritime Strategy* in terms of planning and training, including integrating NATO naval forces. He had entered office just as President Reagan's defense spending surge was ending. Like Trost himself, the *Maritime Strategy* had provided continuity through the many changes of civilian leadership that occurred during Trost's tenure, which included two presidents, three secretaries of defense, two chairmen of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, and four secretaries of the Navy. Not unlike President George H. W. Bush in his low-key, pragmatic, and

³⁸ Trost, "Maritime Strategy for the 1990s," 98.

³⁹ Ibid.

⁴⁰ In 1987, Admiral Trost changed the billet from director, Navy Program Planning (OP-090) to deputy CNO for Navy Program Planning (OP-08).

prudent outlook, he was a steward of the *Maritime Strategy* and the kind of naval thinking it embodied.

The CNO was a proponent of the *Maritime Strategy*, but not the kind represented by Secretary of the Navy John F. Lehman Jr. (1981–87). Trost had little respect for Lehman, after the secretary had contested Trost’s appointment as CNO in 1986, and after having seen Lehman’s management style in action.⁴¹ Lehman had a unique background. He had a PhD in international relations from the University of Pennsylvania. He was a Navy commander who flew carrier attack jets in the reserves. He had been a protégé of Henry Kissinger. A bureaucratic infighter, Lehman had a background in business and public relations that was well suited to drive his 600-ship program through Congress.⁴² His unyielding demand for a strategic vision to organize the service’s activities and yield more ships had coincided with the ongoing work in OPNAV to produce what would become the *Maritime Strategy*.⁴³

For six years, Lehman was the face of the 600-ship navy and tied that effort to the *Maritime Strategy*. Lehman made clear he was hard set against rationalizing the 600-ship navy in terms of general peacetime requirements. Instead, he sought to justify the Navy in terms of the Soviet threat and *only* the Soviet threat.⁴⁴ Once it became obvious that the Soviets were departing from the world stage, however, it was evident that Lehman had little sense of what those ships might do. Lehman told a congressional hearing in March 1990 that the Navy should place half the fleet into the naval reserve and otherwise “stop operating as if we are at wartime tempo.”⁴⁵ His remarkable comment

⁴¹ See Richard Halloran, “Navy Chief Says Lehman Was Not ‘Balanced,’” *New York Times*, April 30, 1987; Peter Grier, “Lehman’s Navy,” *Christian Science Monitor*, January 9, 1989; and John F. Lehman Jr., *Command of the Seas* (New York: C. Scribner’s Sons, 1988), 418.

⁴² Frederick H. Hartmann, *Naval Renaissance: The U.S. Navy in the 1980s* (Annapolis, MD: U.S. Naval Institute, 1990), 45.

⁴³ See Lehman, *Command of the Seas*, 115–150.

⁴⁴ Michael R. Gordon, “John Lehman: The Hard Liner Behind Reagan’s Buildup,” *National Journal*, October 3, 1981, 1765.

⁴⁵ Donald Loepp, “Navy Brass Scorn Lehman Proposal,” (*Newport News, VA*) *Daily Press*, April 5, 1990.

merely reinforced the misconceptions about the *Maritime Strategy* that implied that it really was a Cold War relic. Trost remarked that Lehman's comments were "totally out of touch" with his positions when he was secretary of the Navy, a post that Lehman had left two years earlier.⁴⁶

Unlike the Army, the Navy did not rely on its comparatively smaller reserve component. The Navy was all about "come-as-you-are operations," a fact that the collapse of the Soviet Union did not alter. Naval reserve forces did not serve the interests of operational flexibility and adaptability, tactical and technical proficiency, and forward-deployment. Institutionally, the thought was that they could not be counted on to be "combat ready."⁴⁷ The Navy's capabilities could only be realized when its ships were at sea. Ships that drilled only on the weekends in local waters were wasted assets. Trost pointed out that the cost savings of Lehman's plan would be only about 10–15 percent, and that it would be "almost impossible" to keep part-time sailors trained to operate carriers and nuclear-powered ships. "We need to be able to respond with a properly trained, properly maintained ship," Trost noted, "not one that would require national mobilization or a presidential order."⁴⁸ In other words, the Navy was not a garrison service like the Army and the Air Force; it had "real things to do," as CNO Arleigh Burke had noted.⁴⁹

After entering office in 1986, Trost had tried to separate the *Maritime Strategy* from the 600-ship navy. Perhaps this was because the 600-ship goal would certainly not be achieved after Reagan's defense buildup ended in 1987. That same year, Trost noted that the *Maritime Strategy* "was not—and is not—a force builder, and it was certainly not

⁴⁶ Rainbow and Schultz, "Interview," 70–71.

⁴⁷ In 1990, the Army's reserves made up 58 percent of the total end strength of the Army. The Navy and Marines' were 29 percent. Harry G. Summers, *On Strategy II: A Critical Analysis of the Gulf War* (New York: Dell, 1992), 73.

⁴⁸ Loepp, "Navy Brass Scorn Lehman Proposal."

⁴⁹ Admiral Arleigh A. Burke, letter to Rear Admiral Walter G. Schindler, May 14, 1958, quoted in David A. Rosenberg, "Arleigh Albert Burke," *The Chiefs of Naval Operations*, ed. Robert W. Love Jr. (Annapolis, MD: U.S. Naval Institute, 1980), 287.

the origin of the 600-ship navy,” which was a true enough statement.⁵⁰ Many in Washington and even a few in the Navy had seen the *Maritime Strategy* as simply a kind of “theater” conjured by Secretary Lehman to extract the appropriations needed for a 600-ship navy from the tight fists of Congress and a defense bureaucracy that had fought it at every turn.⁵¹ The 600-ship navy had been a central plank in the Republican Platform of 1980, which had been drafted by Lehman.⁵²

But Trost’s attempt to separate the *Maritime Strategy* from the 600-ship navy was probably more about how he saw the continued value of the *Maritime Strategy* to communicate the Navy’s worth. Like the Navy’s strategists, and indeed like Lehman himself, Trost understood the *Maritime Strategy* as a “strategy” in the general sense of the word—as a means of relating military power to political goals. In his words, the *Maritime Strategy* was based “upon a solid bedrock of sound facts and principles that will remain valid even as our political and economic surroundings change.”⁵³ Its Deterrence or the Transition to War phase, which was about presence, coercive diplomacy, and crisis management, already contained the rationale that asserted the Navy’s place at the forefront of Powell’s strategic approach, which had emphasized deterrence, forward presence, crisis management, and regional conflict. Trost also understood the *Maritime Strategy* as a sublime articulation of the Navy’s way of thinking. He acknowledged the experiential-based nature of American naval thinking and the tendency to rely on implicit strategic approaches in noting, “Over the years our Maritime Strategy has been very much like the British Constitution,” he noted, “unwritten but thoroughly understood by those who must practice it.”⁵⁴ In short, in Trost’s view, there was little to gain by

⁵⁰ Admiral Carlisle A. H. Trost, “Looking Beyond the Maritime Strategy,” U.S. Naval Institute *Proceedings* 113, no. 1 (January 1987): 15.

⁵¹ Lehman, *Command of the Seas*, 146.

⁵² *Ibid.*, 101–102.

⁵³ Trost, “Maritime Strategy for the 1990s,” 100.

⁵⁴ Trost, “Looking Beyond the Maritime Strategy,” 15.

jettisoning the cherished *Maritime Strategy*, which had taken a decade or more to develop, and much to lose.

The CNO's thinking, however, began to change in the spring of 1990.⁵⁵ Two powerful senators had approached Trost to emphasize that the service chiefs needed to "come up here with a different story this year, its [*sic*] time to reduce."⁵⁶ One was Samuel A. Nunn (D-GA), chairman of the Senate Committee on Armed Services. The other was John W. Warner (R-VA), also a committee member and former secretary of the Navy (1972–74). Trost had served as Warner's executive assistant when Warner had been the secretary. Warner had intervened with the Reagan White House to get Trost appointed CNO.⁵⁷ The senators' pronouncement that cuts could not be avoided only reinforced Trost's growing sense that the Base Force was about all the Pentagon could defend. The CNO's testimony in April 1990, which reflected his article, was not particularly well received.⁵⁸ Congress saw arguments about the need for a balanced fleet as simply bureaucratic politics at work. While consensus between the Navy's warfare communities was intrinsic to Navy strategy making, Congress was not about to let what it perceived as internal Navy politics get in the way of a reduced budget.

After Bush approved the Base Force plan in June 1990, the service chiefs relented, having collectively realized the administration was united behind the Base Force. "We knew if Cheney offered the Congress a 40 percent reduction, it would have been pocketed while they asked for more," as one chief noted. "Therefore, we supported the 25 percent number."⁵⁹ Along with Goldwater-Nichols, General Powell's and Secretary Cheney's unified strategic approach was meant to ensure the Services could not develop supposedly non-integrated strategies like *AirLand Battle* and the *Maritime*

⁵⁵ Snider, *Strategy, Forces, and Budgets*, 16–17.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*

⁵⁷ Elaine Sciolino, "Washington at Work; Stoic, Stubborn Admiral Is Guiding Navy in a Stormy Time of Changes," *New York Times*, December 5, 1989.

⁵⁸ Snider, *Strategy, Forces, and Budgets*, 17.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*

Strategy, which had been the primary means to justify their programs to Congress. Trost had little choice but to start focusing on how to defend the Navy's share of the Base Force.

E. CONCLUSION

The first seven months of the post-Cold War era did much to shape the course of American post-Cold War strategy. The Cold War's abrupt end created a conceptual whiplash. The United States had lost the threat that had organized U.S. strategy, foreign policy, and defense policy for over forty years. The disappearance of the Soviet threat resulted in a kind of indeterminacy that raised questions, although not many, about what the United States' position of global preeminence really meant. Consequently, decisions on defense spending became more dependent upon the vagaries of the political process even as Congress moved to reclaim its rights in the area of defense planning and spending, where it had progressively been obliged to take a back seat to the executive branch. Congress's influence was already being felt with Goldwater-Nichols, whose enactment shortly before the Cold War's end was coincidental, but which nonetheless structured the direction of American post-Cold War strategy. According to its authors, Goldwater-Nichols was designed for the Cold War's stable environment and its clearly defined threats and political guidance—not the kind of context in which the United States now found itself.⁶⁰ Nor did Goldwater-Nichols intend that the Joint Staff should become so deeply involved in the resource and strategy decision-making process.⁶¹ As the United States entered the post-Cold War era, however, these points were lost upon the Pentagon's leaders.

The strategic approach and force structure that General Powell and Secretary Cheney came up with were similarly remarkable. Powell rejected calls by the CINCs to

⁶⁰ Lewis, Brown, and Roll, *Service Responses*, 81.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*

base his strategy on their operational requirements.⁶² In his thinking, a threat-based strategy was too inflexible. The Pentagon could not predict where U.S. forces would be engaged and what threats would be encountered. The focus had to be on the types of *capabilities* needed, not on the range of threats. From their own studies and intuition, Powell and Cheney each arrived at a generic strategic approach, a contingent outlook, and a balanced set of forces designed for adaptability, flexibility, and forward deployment. This of course was the Navy's strategic approach all along, a fact that genuinely seemed to escape the notice of U.S. leaders, strategists, and—inexcusably—Navy leaders.

For their part, the Navy's leaders thought the service was well positioned to take advantage of Bush's new strategic approach, whose elements of deterrence, forward presence, crisis management, and regional conflict were closely aligned with the Navy's everyday missions in the Cold War. But their attempt to get U.S. officials to appreciate the Navy's Cold War contributions and the diversity of the fleet's capabilities in support of missions like presence, coercive diplomacy, and crisis management, made little headway. They were struggling against the inertia of American and institutional Cold War thinking. During the Cold War, these "lesser included" missions were considered by Department of Defense officials and Congress to be ancillary to those involving warfighting. The Navy itself never put these missions on par with warfighting, and found it easier to rationalize its preferred weapons systems in terms of general war and nuclear deterrence. When the Navy was finally able to articulate the worth of such missions in 1986 with the unclassified version of the *Maritime Strategy*, these claims were obscured by that strategy's more controversial aspect of targeting Soviet SSBNs, which many strategic analysts considered to be highly destabilizing.

Ironically, one of the primary reasons why Trost's arguments made little headway can be laid at the feet of Secretary Lehman. Throughout the 1980s, Lehman had rationalized the 600-ship navy in terms of the Soviet threat and only the Soviet threat.

⁶² Jaffe, *Development of the Base Force*, 22.

Lehman knew very well how to play the threat-vulnerability card with Congress. In 1981, he had declared, “Every dollar has to be justified by what it can do to defeat the Soviet maritime threat in time of war, and that is it and it only.”⁶³ The approach was understandable, given the implacable nature of the Soviet threat and Congress’s narrow understanding of the military’s purpose, yet regrettable after the Cold War’s abrupt end. Lehman had profoundly colored how OSD, the Joint Staff, and about everyone in Washington had come to view the Navy’s purpose, which tainted their understanding of the Navy’s purpose in the post-Cold War period. Consequently, these lesser-included missions could not be adequately accounted for, and arguments for their relevance now drew silence.

Still, the Navy’s leadership was not very agile. On one hand, the Cold War’s abrupt end and Powell’s manipulation of Goldwater-Nichols gave the Navy little time or opportunity to devise meaningful arguments in a context other than languid congressional testimony and articles in professional journals. In this marketplace of ideas, abstract notions about “non-kinetic missions” and “systemic benefits” simply failed to find purchase. On the other, the Navy’s leaders were complacent in the assumption that U.S. defense officials, Congress, and the American public readily understood the Navy’s Cold War experiences and the virtues of the fleet in the post-Cold War security environment. Navy leaders did not see a political or international security environment that required rapid, even traumatic change on the part of the Navy. With the assumption that the Army and the Air Force were going to take the brunt of the budget cuts, the Navy’s leaders simply “re-branded” its existing strategy.

In these times, some in and out of the Navy wanted more creative leadership. Like Bush, Trost was a caretaker, not a visionary. At no time in this period did senior uniformed or civilian leaders in the Navy ask for a revamped or new strategic vision.⁶⁴

⁶³ Gordon, “John Lehman,” 1765.

⁶⁴ Captain E. Richard Diamond Jr., U.S. Navy (Ret.), discussion with the author, March 25, 2011, Washington, DC. (Diamond was the head of the Strategic Concepts branch [OP-603] from February 1990 to July 1991.)

As Trost noted, “The measure of how well you’re doing in the job is whether or not you keep your name out of the paper.”⁶⁵ As Norman Polmar noted in 1989, “You either need a persuasive individual who can convert people through logic and reasoning or a leader with a lot of charisma. Trost is a professional naval officer, a good guy, the right guy but at the wrong time... His legacy will be that he held the fort in a period of controversy and transition.”⁶⁶

The strategic theorist Edward Luttwak was less forgiving. “He is a man of procedure and process, and his forte is making current things work extremely well,” he noted. “Is he the type of person who can react to a fairly dramatic budget turnaround, who can say, ‘Right now is the time to rethink the Navy in terms of the new budgetary reality’? No, absolutely not. That calls for the ability to challenge, to innovate, which is exactly what process-and-procedure people do not do.”⁶⁷ A harsh indictment indeed, but one really more applicable to other post-Cold War CNOs.

Yet Trost was handed a difficult problem, one that was full of contradictions that he was quite aware of. With the *Maritime Strategy*, the Navy had just spent the last ten years convincing Congress and the Reagan administration that it could make an important contribution in a war with the Soviets beyond the Central Front. During much of the Cold War, critics had argued that the Navy was superfluous to that battle, and that funds spent on carriers should be shifted to the Army and the Air Force. They maintained that the Navy should stick with presence, coercive diplomacy, and limited war. Now, with budget cuts looming, these critics were not about to make the Navy’s case for it, even though many saw the importance of such missions increasing in the post-Cold War era.

In the end, Trost’s attempt to shift the emphasis toward those elements of the *Maritime Strategy* that seemed best suited to new conditions proved unconvincing, however genuine its motivation. The Navy’s efforts to present its new approach as a

⁶⁵ Sciolino, “Washington at Work.”

⁶⁶ Ibid.

⁶⁷ Ibid.

natural extension of its previous one (hard-won and much-esteemed though it was within the institution) proved misplaced. Precisely because institutional priorities were about retaining as much legacy capacity as possible, it was important that whatever was done appear new and innovative. The fact that Trost tried to tell Congress and the Department of Defense hierarchy about the importance of presence and crisis management and that it had no real impact was not his fault. The *Maritime Strategy* was too tainted and too rooted in the past to be of much use in an environment in which only self-proclaimed “new” ideas could be assured a hearing. The dawn of what Bush called the “New World Order” proved a poor moment to trumpet the lessons of the past.

IV. THE WAY AHEAD, 1990

A. KELSO TAKES OVER

In February 1990, President George Bush announced that Admiral Frank B. Kelso II (1990–94) would be the next CNO, the third successive nuclear submariner. A 1956 graduate of the Naval Academy, Kelso had spent most of his career at sea, having served on six submarines. Like Admiral Carlisle Trost before him, Kelso had a programming background. In the early 1980s, Kelso had been in OPNAV as the director of the Strategic Submarine Division and the Program Coordinator of the new *Ohio*-class SSBN and its advanced Trident missile. Later, he worked under Secretary of the Navy John Lehman as his director for Program Appraisal, one of the most powerful positions in Navy Department. Kelso, like Trost, did not have a post-graduate degree nor had he attended the Naval War College.

Admiral Kelso's confirmation hearing was dominated by questions about allegations of sexual harassment, hazing, and exam cheating at the Naval Academy. On other topics, Kelso noted that the Navy needed a "balance of forces." It needed carriers, amphibious ships, and surface combatants, and it needed to maintain the size of the submarine force. When asked if the Navy needed a new strategy, however, Kelso replied that the Navy did not need a *strategy*—it already had one in the *Maritime Strategy*. What it needed was a *policy*. He noted, "Military strategy needs a specific enemy and, though developed in peacetime, is applied during war....I do not expect a global conflict so the issue before us today seems more one of naval policy."¹

CNO Kelso understood the term "naval strategy" to be an operational plan of action against a specific threat at sea, which is how many Navy officers understood it. Kelso, who was intimately familiar with the *Maritime Strategy*, may have been

¹ Admiral Frank B. Kelso II, testimony to the U.S. Senate, Armed Services Committee, *Hearings on the Confirmation of Admiral Frank B. Kelso to the Chief of Naval Operations*, 101st Congress, 2nd Session, June 14, 1990. Emphasis added.

purposely defining it as such to distance the Navy from the *Maritime Strategy*. By doing so, however, he was rejecting the understanding that naval strategy was a general “way of thinking” about how the Navy related military power to political goals, which was how Trost, Lehman, and its developers saw it. CNOs James D. Watkins (1982–86) and Trost had fought hard to portray the *Maritime Strategy* not as a war plan, which is how many U.S. officials understood it, but as a general argument about how the Navy made a strategic difference.

Admiral Kelso’s emphasis on policy reflected the central focus of his tenure. His supremely passionate interest was finding ways to optimize managerial procedures and processes. Kelso was an ardent disciple of the organizational theorist W. Edwards Deming, the guru of corporate scientific management in the 1980s and 1990s. Deming, whose approach was known as “Total Quality Management,” was credited with improving Japanese manufacturing productivity by finding efficiencies and improving quality through managerial changes. Deming’s key tenets included establishing clear principles, specific goals, and a collective commitment. As soon as he was in office, Kelso vigorously installed Deming’s approach, which he renamed “Total Quality Leadership,” throughout the Navy.²

Admiral Kelso’s fascination with finding process efficiencies stemmed from his background as a nuclear submariner and programmer. The need to assiduously follow and constantly improve processes as a way of thinking had been inculcated into the Navy’s submarine community by Admiral Hyman Rickover to prevent accidents with nuclear reactors. Kelso was a protégé of John Lehman, who, as Tom Hone noted, was “the most aggressive and organizationally perceptive Navy secretary since James Forrestal.”³ It was Kelso, not Trost, who Lehman had picked in 1986 to be the next CNO,

² Admiral William A. Owens, *High Seas: The Naval Passage to an Uncharted World* (Annapolis, MD: U.S. Naval Institute, 1995), 123–124.

³ Thomas C. Hone, *Power and Change: The Administrative History of the Office of the Chief of Naval Operations, 1946–1986* (Washington, DC: Naval Historical Center, 1989), 114.

but White House officials overruled this choice.⁴ As the head of Lehman's program appraisal office, Kelso had seen up close how Lehman secretary drove the Navy Department bureaucracy to find efficiencies in acquisition, which was a responsibility handed to the service secretaries by Goldwater-Nichols. Sharing Lehman's frustration with the process, Kelso studied how Lehman had used policy to control the bureaucracy and oversee OPNAV's most important function, resource apportionment.⁵ Kelso also studied how Lehman had cut through the stonewalling of the three "barons," the three who were the respective program sponsors for the Navy's dominant warfare communities—surface ships, aviation, and submarines.⁶ Whereas Trost saw competition among the warfare communities as healthy, Kelso saw the process as inherently pernicious. Following Deming's approach, Kelso sought to change the process of how resources were determined to one that generated a collective commitment by decision makers particularly at the one- and two-star admiral level; these were the Navy's most current "operators," and represented the future of the Navy. For Kelso, consensus, not competition, was the key.

Kelso's best and brightest was Vice Admiral Paul David Miller, the deputy CNO for Naval Warfare (OP-07). Miller was a brilliant officer, a skilled bureaucratic infighter, and a builder of bureaucratic empires. He was the Navy's rising star. He had been Lehman's executive assistant for four years, an unusually long time to be away from the fleet.⁷ A surface officer, Miller was promoted to admiral without having commanded a ship as a captain, a rare feat. Miller had made Naval Warfare into a powerhouse that rivaled OPNAV's other centers of power—Navy Program Planning (OP-08) and Plans, Policy, and Operations (OP-06), the latter of which was responsible for strategy and

⁴ John F. Lehman Jr., *Command of the Seas* (New York: C. Scribner's Sons, 1988), 417–418.

⁵ See Hone, *Power and Change*, 114–122.

⁶ *Ibid.*, 116.

⁷ L. Edgar Prina, "Lehman Picks Rear Adm. Miller, An Ex-aide, to Command 7th Fleet," *San Diego Union*, July 25, 1986.

operations.⁸ Miller was the catalyst for Kelso's demand for a "roadmap" policy that laid out how the Navy was to organize to plan for the next decade.⁹

B. KELSO'S NEED FOR A POLICY

On August 2, 1990, President Bush unveiled the new strategy that was drawn up by Secretary of Defense Dick Cheney and Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff General Colin Powell, which included the Base Force, during a speech in Colorado. He noted that the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait earlier in the day showed that the world still contained serious threats to U.S. interests that were unrelated to the U.S.-Soviet confrontation, threats that could emerge without warning.¹⁰ The new strategy was based on four elements: 1) strategic deterrence and defense; 2) forward presence; 3) crisis response; and 4) the ability to reconstitute the U.S. military rapidly should large-scale threats emerge. Of these elements, Don M. Snider, a scholar at the U.S. Army War College's Strategic Studies Institute, noted, "Only the first objective was a carryover from the cold war," a stunning statement, one that revealed how little the Army understood how the Navy actually operated during the Cold War.¹¹

During a conference on August 20, 1990, Powell told the CINCs and service chiefs to focus on reshaping the force structure. He noted that the United States still needed to project global power, which, as he stated, was what the United States was doing at that moment in the Middle East, seeking to protect Saudi Arabia from invasion while preparing to expel Iraqi forces from Kuwait.¹² Powell also emphasized that

⁸ Captain E. Richard Diamond Jr., U.S. Navy (Ret.), discussion with the author, March 25, 2011, Washington, DC.

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ George H. W. Bush, "Remarks at the Aspen Institute Symposium in Aspen, Colorado" (August 2, 1990), http://bushlibrary.tamu.edu/research/public_papers.php?id=2128&year=1990&month=8.

¹¹ Don M. Snider, *Strategy, Forces and Budgets: Dominant Influences in Executive Decision Making, Post-Cold War, 1989-91* (Carlisle Barracks, PA: U.S. Army War College, Strategic Studies Institute, February 1993), unpaginated, PDF, 6.

¹² Lorna S. Jaffe, *The Development of the Base Force 1989-1992* (Washington, DC: Joint History Office, Office of the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, July 1993), 39.

regardless of how the Iraqi crisis ended, Congress would still not fund the Services' respective budget submissions and program proposals, which is called the Program Objective Memorandum or "POM," which were based on pre-Base Force funding levels.

CNO Kelso supported the Base Force, but only because he thought it would blunt further predations on the fleet, which included the hundred or so ships still under construction.¹³ He was not opposed to taking the Navy below its current funding level, but thought that naval forces should be reduced gradually. Kelso thought that reaching the Base Force level too quickly, for example, would threaten the health of the Navy's industrial base.

On August 23, 1990, three days after the conference, Kelso and Secretary of the Navy H. Lawrence Garrett III (1989–92) released an internal Navy Department memorandum, the subject line of which was "The Way Ahead." In the document, they noted that for U.S. naval forces,

The way ahead is not as murky as some envision. We have a first class Navy and Marine Corps with substantial numbers of new ships and aircraft at sea and in production. As we look to the immediate future we *do* know the force structure that will make up the Department of the Navy in the year 2000. It is with us today or under construction.¹⁴

In this context, they noted that the Navy Department had three "overriding challenges":

Of immediate relevance is the necessity of maintaining an adequate industrial base to ensure efficient procurement of the next generation of platforms and systems.

Second, given the projected fiscal climate, we need to determine how many ships and aircraft we can afford to operate in the decade ahead.

¹³ Paragraph based on Jaffe, *Development of the Base Force*, 40.

¹⁴ Secretary of the Navy Lawrence Garrett III and Admiral Frank B. Kelso, Joint Memorandum, Subject: The Way Ahead. Department of the Navy: Office of the Secretary and Office of the Chief of Naval Operations. OPNAV Ser 00/OU500222, 1. Photocopy. August 23, 1990. Emphasis in the original.

Finally, taking the next step, we must examine the shape and size of the Navy of the 21st century which will replace our present ships and aircraft.¹⁵

In short, the most important part of Kelso's first major initiative was to maintain the industrial base that constructed the likes of nuclear-powered submarines, cruisers, and carriers.

To find cost savings to offset the loss of operating funds, the memorandum noted that the Navy "must refocus leadership and management practices in order to maintain our nation's investment at the least cost," which is what Total Quality Leadership was all about.¹⁶ The Navy's drive to save costs through process efficiencies, which was a major focus area for the CNO and other senior Navy leaders throughout the post-Cold War era, started a few months after the end of the Cold War. The lack of a threat in the foreseeable future meant Kelso could dedicate considerable time and effort to improving the process by which resource decisions were made.¹⁷ He wanted a process that could more accurately determine how many ships and aircraft the Navy could afford to operate and how to reduce costs to ensure more of the same. It was about ensuring a balanced fleet in the long term, and the diversified industrial base required to support it.

But the challenge of examining the shape and size of the Navy of the next century would not be guided by a comprehensive top-down strategy. Instead, it would be accomplished through the internal staff processes associated with OPNAV's two most important functions—programming, which was the responsibility of Navy Program Planning (OP-08), and establishing the requirements for platforms and systems, which had been dominated by the three barons, but now was overseen by Miller's Naval Warfare (OP-07), Kelso's trusted agent in cutting through the barons' stonewalling.

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷ Captain Peter M. Swartz, U.S. Navy (Ret.), discussion with the author, November 20, 2009, Alexandria, VA.

C. THE NAVY STRATEGISTS AND THE NEED FOR A NEW VISION

Despite the historic events of 1989 and 1990, neither CNO Trost nor CNO Kelso had asked for something to replace the *Maritime Strategy*.¹⁸ Nevertheless, there was an organized effort underway to do just that.¹⁹ It was not driven, as might have been expected, by the new deputy CNO for Plans, Policy, and Operations (OP-06), Vice Admiral Robert J. “Barney” Kelly, who arrived in February 1990. Unlike his predecessor, Vice Admiral Charles R. Larson, Kelly initially focused on the operations part of the job, with which he was most familiar and comfortable, and it took some time and external prodding for him to get over his publicly expressed disdain for the Navy’s strategy/political-military officers and his lack of interest in the strategy side.²⁰ Previous officers who had filled the billet, who were invariably promoted to four-star fleet commands, had either been superb strategic thinkers or at least facilitated the efforts of the Strategic Concepts branch (OP-603), which, established in 1978, was the office of around fifteen highly educated officers that had developed the *Maritime Strategy*. Kelly was marginally receptive to the branch’s ideas; he did not see himself as the engine of change in strategic thinking within OPNAV so he never initiated any process to update the *Maritime Strategy*. Like many that would fill that billet, he understood his purpose as serving the day-to-day demands of the CNO, whose background was operational and programmatic, and not strategic. For these admirals, adherence to the CNO’s to-do list was the safer, more expedient route to promotion than one whose allegiance was to strategy in general, which risked getting “out in front” of the CNO or the secretary of the Navy with self-generated projects, for example. Kelly took his lead first from CNO Trost and then Kelso, who made it abundantly clear that OPNAV’s focus should not be on strategy, but on force structure, which was in line with General Powell’s guidance.

¹⁸ Diamond, discussion with the author.

¹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰ Ibid. Rest of paragraph based on Diamond, discussion with the author.

The unbidden effort came from an unofficial group of Navy officers and a few Marines, which operated a Washington, DC-area Navy strategy discussion forum. These were mostly mid-level (i.e., lieutenant commanders, commanders, and captains) Navy officers from Strategic Concepts (OP-603) and the CNO Executive Panel (OP-00K), plus a few Marines from the Plans, Policy, and Operations section of Headquarters Marine Corps. (Plans, Policy and Operations was the Marines Corps's equivalent to OP-06.) Commandant of the Marine Corps General Alfred M. "Al" Gray Jr. (1987–91) and Lieutenant General Carl E. Mundy, the head of the Plans, Policy, and Operations section (and commandant of the Marine Corps 1991–95), made sure that their officers were constantly engaged in the Navy's strategy-making process. They had sent their best officers to work with Strategic Concepts (OP-603), the CNO Executive Panel (OP-00K), and Kelly's predecessor, Vice Admiral Larson.²¹

These Navy officers were part of the Navy's cadre of officers-as-strategic-thinkers, the service's small and tightly knit strategy community, whose official name was the Strategic Planning and Political-Military sub-specialty community.²² Between their tours in the fleet, these two hundred or so officers were assigned to Plans, Policy, and Operations (OP-06) and the office of the secretary of the Navy. They also filled a few billets in OSD, the Joint Staff, the State Department, the Naval War College, and the Navy's component commands to the CINCs (e.g., the U.S. Pacific Fleet, which was the Navy component command of U.S. Pacific Command). Many were part of what was informally known as the *Maritime Strategy* "mafia," officers who served multiple tours on different, mostly Navy staffs that kept them in a position to develop and test the strategy throughout the 1980s. Many had accumulated multiple tours in OPNAV, which—before Goldwater-Nichols had mandated that most of the Services' senior

²¹ Ibid.

²² Subspecialties are disciplines that are in addition to an officer's primary warfare specialty, and generally require postgraduate education and experience in the respective field. The subspecialty system establishes the educational and skill set-based requirements for the communities' respective billets and attempts to fill them with qualified officers.

officers needed to have had tours in joint commands—had been *the* staff that an officer needed to serve in to better his or her chances for promotion.²³

The development of a cadre of well-educated and experienced strategists had been part of wider efforts by CNOs Hayward and Watkins to improve the Navy's strategic thinking. Secretary of the Navy John Lehman had lauded this intellectually inclined group, almost all of whom possessed advanced academic degrees, for their "very able minds."²⁴ The Navy's strategists considered themselves to be the keepers of the Navy's strategic flame; their allegiance was not to their leaders as much as to the strategic well-being of the institution and strategy in general, particularly if those leaders were not from the Navy's strategy community, which was an increasingly common occurrence in the post-Cold War era, unlike during the Cold War. The niche skills of these officer-strategists did much to compensate for the Navy's chronic and debilitating lack of proficiency in strategic thinking, of which they were painfully aware.²⁵

The group met monthly outside the Pentagon, and eventually came to focus on attempting to solve two problems. First, from a conceptual standpoint, how should the Navy use its existing means to fulfill political ends, some of which were long familiar, while others needed more definition? They were looking for something more conceptual than could be expected from the CINCs or their Navy's component commands. The pragmatic approaches and regional requirements and perspectives of the regional CINCs and their Navy component commands was thought to stand in the way of a more holistic

²³ See Peter M. Swartz with Karin Duggan, *The U.S. Navy in the World (1981–1990)*: "Context for U.S. Navy Capstone Strategies and Concepts," PowerPoint brief in PDF (Alexandria, VA: Center for Naval Analyses, December 2011), 41, slide 81, <http://www.cna.org/research/2011/us-navy-world-1981-1990-context-us-navy-capstone>.

²⁴ Lehman, *Command of the Seas*, 129.

²⁵ The strategy community's officers overwhelmingly came from the surface warfare and maritime patrol aviation communities. The route to command in the submarine and carrier aviation communities was far less accommodating, more narrowly prescribed, and institutionally less forgiving. Of the ninety or so Navy officers that served in the Strategic Concepts branch from 1978 to 1991, which was the branch that developed the *Maritime Strategy* and was considered the focal point of the community, fewer than half a dozen were carrier aviators and submariners. Peter M. Swartz, "The Maritime Strategy of the 1980s: Threads, Strands and Line" (unpublished; photocopy, draft date: February 12, 1996), 179–181.

understanding of naval purpose, one that fully admitted both domestic politics and foreign policy considerations. Second, what kind of strategic concept was needed to fulfill institutional and external political requirements? As noted by Captain E. Richard “Dick” Diamond Jr., who was the new chief of the Strategic Concepts branch (OP-603), the

question was “So what do we do for a vision to replace the Maritime Strategy now that the Berlin Wall is down and the Evil Soviet Empire is no more?” This was a question generated strictly among the pol-mil [political-military] cognoscenti—there was no formal Navy leadership tasker to even ask the question, much less provide an answer at this point [February 1990].²⁶

So, while the Navy’s strategists saw the need for a post-Cold War vision immediately after the end of the Cold War, Navy leaders did not.

After a series of false starts, the informal group organized itself into four two-man teams of officers, who each had a month to put together a revised strategic concept and had to do so independently from one another.²⁷ On a Saturday in late March 1990, unbeknownst to Vice Admiral Kelly and CNO Kelso, who were unaware of the group’s efforts, they presented their visions to a select audience that included one or two rear admirals, who were part of the Navy’s strategy community. Amid lively critiques, they adapted a phrase offered by Commander Joseph A. Sestak Jr., who worked on the Joint Staff, but participated on one of the four concept teams. Sestak had declared that the Navy-Marine Corps team was the “Enabling Force for Follow-On Joint Operations.” The themes that emerged during their discussions formed the basis of their as yet unnamed strategic concept.

Soon after, the group formed an integrated writing team led by OP-603 with participants from OP-00K and Headquarters Marine Corps, which assembled these themes into the following propositions: 1) the future of the Navy was not about just war

²⁶ Diamond, discussion with the author.

²⁷ Paragraph based on Diamond, discussion with the author.

at sea, but also about supporting the land battle; 2) the expeditionary nature and forward presence of the Navy-Marine Corps team made the naval services (i.e., the Navy and Marine Corps) the “911 crisis response team” and the “enabling force” for subsequent joint operations in the littoral regions; 3) the Navy needed more cultural awareness and foreign area specialists; 4) the Navy should cultivate bilateral and multilateral maritime-based alliances; and 5) anti-submarine warfare and anti-air warfare capabilities would be still be required, but only for local operations, and this would potentially free up budget space for more Marine Corps-associated capabilities.²⁸

In July 1990, Captain Diamond presented a revised and refined brief to Vice Admiral Kelly, who demanded to know “who tasked you to come up with this?”²⁹ Kelly, however, promptly arranged to have Diamond brief Vice Admiral Miller. Miller, the consummate empire builder, was enthralled with the group’s work and immediately suggested that Naval Warfare (OP-07) and Plans, Policy, and Operations (OP-06) work together. He asked Diamond to send him everything they had. Miller also suggested a new title, “Won if by Sea,” which was dropped in the fall for the more conventional “Meeting the Challenges of a Changing World: Navy Policy for the Future.”³⁰ By that time, Miller had started his own plan that was based on the group’s efforts, which was known as “Sea Power and Global Leadership: Maritime Concepts for 1990 and Beyond.”³¹ Although both offices continued work on their respective plans through the fall of 1990, Miller was a member of CNO Kelso’s inner circle (which dated back to their close association while working together in Secretary Lehman’s office), so Miller used his access to outmaneuver Kelly with the result that the Miller document soon supplanted Kelly’s version.

²⁸ Paragraph based on Diamond, discussion with the author.

²⁹ Unless otherwise noted, paragraph based on Diamond, discussion with the author.

³⁰ Laura M. Zabriske, “New Maritime Strategy will Elevate Marine Corps’ Role in Naval Operations,” *Inside the Navy* 3, no. 51 (December 24, 1990).

³¹ *Ibid.*

D. GENERAL GRAY'S NEED FOR A NEW VISION

In the 1980s, the Marines' involvement in Navy strategy making was commonplace.³² The *Maritime Strategy* benefited greatly from that relationship. It had brought about a close working relationship between OPNAV and Headquarters Marine Corps. Their collective efforts resulted in the release of the *Amphibious Warfare Strategy* in 1985. Signed by CNO Watkins and Commandant of the Marine Corps General P. X. Kelley (1983–87), it was the amphibious component of the *Maritime Strategy*. To reduce its political vulnerability after Vietnam, the Marine Corps had redefined its purpose from expeditionary warfare to amphibious warfare, a unique role that set it apart from the Army.³³ Marine leaders saw little merit in joining the Army on the Central Front in Europe. In the late 1980s, however, Marine leaders began to re-adopt expeditionary warfare as the institution's core identity in the expectation that such operations would, in practice, call for the kind of agile, light-infantry force that only the Marines could supply. President Ronald Reagan's interventionist foreign policy, which saw Marines involved in a variety of mid- and low-intensity conflicts, meant that expeditionary warfare was back in vogue. In 1988, the rhetorical and conceptual switch became official: "MAFs"—Marine Amphibious Forces—became "MEFs"—Marine Expeditionary Forces, and so on across the board.

In 1989, General Gray released the seminal Fleet Marine Force Manual 1, *Warfighting* (FMF1), which was the doctrine that laid out the Marines' unique warfighting philosophy of expeditionary maneuver warfare. Although the Marines had been instrumental in broadening the *Maritime Strategy*, it was *Warfighting* that invigorated the Marine Corps's sense of purpose and brought about the alignment of its operational, programmatic, administrative, and pedagogic activities.

³² Swartz, discussion with the author. (Swartz was one of the principal authors of the *Maritime Strategy*.)

³³ Paragraph based on Swartz, discussion with the author and Terry Terriff, "'Innovate or Die': Organizational Culture and the Origins of Maneuver Warfare in the United States Marine Corps" *Journal of Strategic Studies* 29, no. 3 (June 2006): 486–494 passim.

But *Warfighting* was not tied to a highly visible programmatic goal like the 600-ship navy, nor was such a link intended. The Marine Corps's strategic approach was less about resources and technology and more about the near constant innovation of warfighting. *Warfighting* did not present its central concepts in the guise of an operational war plan with the Soviets. Nor did it attempt to shift the direction of U.S. strategy or broaden American strategic thought to a more systemic way of thinking.

Warfighting was simply that—a compelling and still influential warfighting doctrine. Its purpose was to inculcate a highly adaptable mindset that could readily deal with and take advantage of the unforeseen changes that occur on the battlefield to deliver victory. For the Marines, “doctrine” was not prescriptive. It was a shared philosophy about the operational art of war. Because of its nature, *Warfighting*, unlike the *Maritime Strategy*, survived the Cold War, and, given the nature of the emerging environment, it thrived as well.

The Bush administration's focus on regional conflicts and crisis response highlighted the requirements for the Marines' capabilities even more than the Navy's. General Gray—the most vocal of the service chiefs—fought against General Powell's efforts to cut the end strength (i.e., the total number of personnel) and the budget of the Marine Corps. Gray asserted that geography had always determined its size, not the Soviet threat.³⁴ Powell agreed in essence, noting, “The Marines were on somewhat firmer ground [than the other services]. With justification, they presented themselves as the nation's ‘911’ response force, with or without a Soviet Union.”³⁵ The only concession that Powell made in his Base Force was maintaining the size of the Marine Corps (and the Army reserve).³⁶

In September 1990, Captain Diamond presented the brief to General Gray. In a session that lasted over an hour, Gray displayed much enthusiasm and provided new

³⁴ Jaffe, *Development of the Base Force*, 38.

³⁵ Colin L. Powell and Joseph E. Persico, *My American Journey* (New York: Ballantine, 1996), 425.

³⁶ Jaffe, *Development of the Base Force*, 38.

ideas and helpful guidance.³⁷ Gray saw two key messages in the brief he wanted Diamond to emphasize: 1) the power, flexibility, and usefulness of forces projected from the sea; and 2) the need for naval power to be on station overseas.³⁸ Power projection “goes hand in hand with diplomatic power backed up by the military equation,” Gray noted. “This puts teeth into our diplomacy. Make the connection. Seapower is designed so the navies of the free world can go wherever, whenever we want! This can’t be watered down by rice-bowlers” (i.e., those in the Department of the Navy and the Department of Defense that sought to jealously protect their programs at the expense of U.S. interests).³⁹

General Gray wanted the brief to be turned into an enduring comprehensive strategy document, not a “programmatically brief,” and have both the CNO and commandant sign it. The audience should be not only the Navy and the Marine Corps, but also the entire defense establishment. “It’s not a document that’s only the CNO’s. [It belongs to] the nation’s seapower leaders.... [The larger, strategic thrust of maritime strategy] will be included or we’ll have two documents,” he threatened.⁴⁰ Gray emphasized the need to highlight the combined nature of naval operations and the ability of the Navy-Marine Corps team to tailor forces at sea. He also noted that the Navy’s treatment of strategic sealift was inadequate as evinced by current events in the Middle East, which saw a massive movement of material and manpower heading to the Persian Gulf. “We want to portray the aggregate usefulness and flexibility of the sea services,” Gray stated.⁴¹ “Reach out and embrace every necessary issue that is right for the Navy-Marine Corps of the future,” he closed.⁴²

³⁷ Captain E. Richard Diamond Jr. “Memorandum for the Record: CMC [Commandant of the Marine Corps] Comments on ‘Won if by Sea’” brief held at Headquarters Marine Corps, September 7, 1990,” 1.

³⁸ Ibid., 3.

³⁹ Ibid.

⁴⁰ Ibid., 2.

⁴¹ Ibid., 3.

⁴² Ibid., 4.

E. “THE WAY AHEAD”

In the winter of 1990–91, Admiral Kelso and General Gray agreed to articulate their thinking in a journal article. It was Kelso’s first major statement on strategy since taking over. Entitled “The Way Ahead,” the twelve-page article came out in the April 1991 issues of *Proceedings* and the *Marine Corps Gazette* under the byline of Secretary Garrett, Kelso, and Gray. The article, which was written as the service chiefs were preparing for their annual posture statements to Congress in February 1991, was the first such document drafted, signed, and published with equality between the two services. It was developed by a Navy officer from Strategic Concepts (OP-603) and a Marine from Plans, Policy, and Operations, edited by some officers from Naval Warfare (OP-07), and finalized by Kelso and Gray, reportedly on the CNO’s kitchen table.⁴³

Unlike the Air Force’s highly publicized “Global Reach—Global Power,” which had come out in June 1990 and was seen as an indication that the Air Force was well ahead of the other services in adapting to the post-Cold War era, “The Way Ahead” was not a comprehensive strategic statement. It was an unstructured, multi-purpose, and consensus-driven article that sought to represent the various agendas of its many authors—Miller, Gray, Kelso, the Navy strategists, and the Marine strategists. With it, Kelso was looking for a way to rationalize the Navy’s force structure to mitigate looming cuts in the defense budget.

To the general audience, “The Way Ahead” provided a broad explanation of how the two services would meet emerging security needs. For sailors and Marines, the article was a clarion call to accept the change wrought by altered domestic political and strategic environments, which included a Navy-Marine Corps partnership and a much smaller Navy. To the regional CINCs, the article asserted the Navy’s and Marine Corps’s operational virtues, and presented innovative ideas about how the CINCs could package task forces and change deployment routines. To Congress and U.S. defense leaders, the

⁴³ The OP-603 representative was Commander Michael Dunaway and the Marine representative from Plans, Policy and Operations was Major Al Heim.

article argued that the Bush administration's new strategic approach demanded capabilities for forward presence, crisis management, regional conflict, and conventional (as well as nuclear) deterrence—capabilities that the Navy and Marine Corps were uniquely able to provide.

The article started out by noting that for almost fifty years, the United States had focused on global war, which was to be fought primarily in Europe and the surrounding waters, and now had to adapt to the new environment. “We must shift the objective of our national security strategy from containing the Soviet Union to maintaining global stability.”⁴⁴ This evidently did not mean that the naval services should now focus on how to achieve global stability. According to a peculiarly worded statement, providing for global stability meant reshaping “naval force structure, strategy, tactics, and operating patterns *that are wedded too closely* to the concept of an Armageddon at sea with the Soviet Union.”⁴⁵ The article was defining naval purpose in terms of what it was not supposed to be, rather than the more intractable problem of how the fleet would achieve global stability. Implicitly then, it was assumed that global stability was the byproduct of presence, coercive diplomacy, and conventional deterrence. The article noted that while the *Maritime Strategy*'s “enduring principles” were to be gleaned for current planning, the *Maritime Strategy* “remains on the shelf...ready to be retrieved if a global threat should reemerge.”⁴⁶ That statement essentially sealed the fate of the *Maritime Strategy*. Both *Warfighting* and the *Maritime Strategy* represented their service's respective warfighting philosophy, but the Navy's was being pulled from circulation, retained only for reference.

The authors' interpretation of the strategic environment differed little from that presented by CNO Trost in “A Maritime Strategy for the 1990s,” an environment that

⁴⁴ H. Lawrence Garrett III, Admiral Frank B. Kelso II, and General Alfred M. Gray Jr., U.S. Marine Corps, “The Way Ahead,” U.S. Naval Institute *Proceedings* 117, no. 4 (April 1991): 38.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 36. Emphasis added.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 38.

demanded the kinds of capabilities the Navy and Marine Corps could provide. The authors asserted in much clearer terms that the Navy's primary purpose was power projection and that the carrier battle and amphibious ready groups were the cornerstone of the U.S. military's forward-deployed forces. As evinced in the ongoing campaign to eject Iraqi forces from Kuwait, which had begun on January 17, 1991 under the name "Operation Desert Storm," the strike capabilities of the carrier were, as the article noted, being supplemented by the distributed firepower of surface combatants and submarines that launched conventionally armed Tomahawks into Iraq.

The authors offered a distinct definition of jointness. To them, "jointness" meant understanding, respecting, and applying the Services' unique "functional capabilities" and institutional core competencies in a complementary fashion. "When each service fulfills its respective role," they noted, "we can capitalize on synergistic capabilities that stem from decades of organizational focus and institutional ethos."⁴⁷ The definition was about *coordination* between the Services, not *integration*, which was a key distinction in a period where jointness was still being defined and a joint "climate" had yet been established.⁴⁸ In the article, "jointness" was always used in conjunction with "combined" (i.e., allied and coalition forces), and both were discussed in the context of collective security, which was noted to be a central element of U.S. policy.

The article provided creative operational concepts of the kind that Miller would operationalize later in his career. For example, carrier battle groups and amphibious ready groups, which, as the article stated, did not have to be tethered to specific areas and contingencies, could be tailored before or during deployment for specific regions, types of crises, or missions. The authors highlighted the increasing importance of new missions including "humanitarian assistance; nation-building; security assistance; and

⁴⁷ Ibid., 39.

⁴⁸ Richard Meinhardt, *Strategic Planning by The Chairmen, Joint Chiefs of Staff, 1990–2005* (Carlisle Barracks, PA: U.S. Army War College, Strategic Studies Institute, April, 2006), 17.

peacekeeping, counternarcotic, counterterrorist, counterinsurgency, and crisis-response operations,” missions which would come to be known collectively as “Military Operations Other than War.”⁴⁹

The authors noted that given a smaller fleet and the regional CINCs’ naval presence requirements for regional deterrence and immediate crisis response, which had been highlighted by the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait, the fleet needed “focused” forward presence. In other words, the fleet needed to focus more on the effects it wanted to achieve from steaming around in areas of U.S. interests. The authors noted that the fleet needed the capability to “surge” its forces out of its bases in the United States, an idea that would be purposively marginalized by the Navy for the rest of the decade.⁵⁰ Keeping a larger percentage of the fleet tied up in the United States and surging it when required undermined the need for forward deployment and reduced the numbers of ships needed to support the regional CINCs’ presence requirements. The authors pointed out that the improved capabilities of newer ships could not make up for the lack of numbers; both quantity and quality were needed to ensure the “credibility” of U.S. forward presence. Gaps in presence, they argued, could bring regional instability and conflict.

To meet the demands of President Bush’s new policy and address the expansive number of threats and missions that the policy highlighted, the authors noted that naval forces needed to “possess a wide range of capabilities.”⁵¹ “With a smaller force,” they noted, “we will find it harder and harder to maintain the wide balance of capabilities required to counter sudden, unexpected geopolitical challenges and newly emerging threats or capabilities.”⁵² The authors sent a stern warning to Congress and defense officials not to narrow the capabilities of a 451-ship navy:

⁴⁹ Garrett, Kelso, and Gray, “The Way Ahead,” 41.

⁵⁰ Ibid.

⁵¹ Ibid.

⁵² Ibid., 46.

There are clearly increased risks associated with a 25% reduction in our naval forces....High-tempo operations will be even more difficult to sustain. Smaller forces will be less well-balanced, will have less surge capability, and will be less able to respond in a timely manner. This will place a premium on early political decisions.⁵³

Clearly, a balanced force, which was said to include attack submarines, whose relevance was now sure to be questioned, was a preeminent goal.

In the end, “The Way Ahead” proved about as ill timed as Trost’s “Maritime Strategy of the 1990s.” The article was submitted halfway through Operation Desert Storm, which had started in mid-January 1991 and ended in late February. Initially, Navy leaders thought the service had performed well. Within days of Iraq’s invasion and occupation of Kuwait in August 1990, two carriers were within striking distance of Kuwait, which many believed had deterred Iraq from continuing into Saudi Arabia. Within weeks, four carriers and two Tomahawk-armed battleship groups had arrived, which made up the bulk of U.S. tactical air power in the region until late fall of 1990. In August 1990, Navy-led coalition forces began interdicting ships on their way to Iraq to enforce United Nations sanctions, which subsequently crippled Iraq’s economy and denied its military the parts and supplies necessary to wage war. By the end of August 1990, a fully equipped force of 15,000 Marines were deployed in Saudi Arabia, which was the first armored force to arrive. The performance of the Navy’s expensive Tomahawk cruise missile exceeded all expectations. In the largest naval armada since 1945, strike aircraft from six carriers, which represented 23 percent of the total U.S. strike force, flew 23 percent of the overall combat missions.⁵⁴

Nevertheless, because it had been completed in the middle of Operation Desert Storm (it appeared in the April 1991 issue of *Proceedings*), “The Way Ahead” could not take account of the United States’ “revolutionary” victory over Iraq in which air power

⁵³ Ibid.

⁵⁴ Rear Admiral Riley D. Mixson, “Where We Must Do Better,” U.S. Naval Institute *Proceedings* 117, no. 8 (August 1991): 38.

demonstrated its ability to deliver decisive effects. Nor did the article defend the Navy sufficiently against growing complaints that it had been ill prepared to fight in a truly joint—meaning “integrated”—manner. Because the article’s ideas were not directly pegged to the conduct of the war, it appeared that the Navy’s leaders was either supremely out of touch or more concerned about saving its force structure than understanding the “profound” lessons of the Gulf War.

Despite this, officers in OPNAV were still confident that the Navy would prevail in the upcoming budgetary wars. As Captain Diamond noted,

At the time we thought that we could construct a rationale for preserving most of the Navy while transferring the brunt of the inevitable cuts to the Army (with its archaic Fulda Gap mentality) and the Air Force (with no more enemy air armada and IADs [Integrated Air Defenses] to overwhelm)—despite the recent mostly *AirLand Battle* triumph in the Iraqi desert.⁵⁵

By the summer of 1991, however, any sense of optimism had ebbed away. Instead, that feeling was replaced with growing trepidation about the Navy’s ability to make itself relevant.

F. CONCLUSION

In the final analysis, “The Way Ahead” indicated only that the Navy was gathering ideas. Like the president he served, CNO Kelso was uncomfortable with the “vision thing.” He did not concern himself with explaining to Congress why the nation now needed a Navy, or providing the fleet with a conceptual framework to help it understand its purpose in a period of transition. Instead, he worried about the fleet’s shape and size, and the managerial processes needed to determine and support it. Edward Luttwak’s observation about CNO Trost is more appropriately applied to Kelso, whose

⁵⁵ Diamond, discussion with the author. The Fulda Gap was the focal point of U.S. and NATO attentions in the 1970s and 1980s, located as it was on the Central Front in Central Europe, a corridor through which it was thought the Soviet invasion would flow.

forte really was making things work.⁵⁶ Such skills are, it must be said, indispensable in running a large industrial organization and bending an immense bureaucracy to one's will.

But like most post-Cold War CNOs, Kelso's sins were acts of omission, not commission. He did his job and did it well. Given Goldwater-Nichols and General Powell's manipulation of it, Kelso did not think he was responsible for anything other than equipping, training, and organizing the Navy. According to Kelso's way of thinking, his job, like that of OPNAV, was to focus on the *means*. The White House, OSD, and now the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff determined the *ends*. The CINCs and their naval component commanders determined the *ways*. In the CNO's perspective, strategy—the relating of ways, means, and political ends—was someone else's job.

In contrast, General Gray felt responsible for representing the maritime dimensions of U.S. strategy, and despaired of his counterpart's indifferent attitude toward that responsibility. Gray ensured that his Marines worked closely with Navy's strategists to move the Navy closer to the Marines' way of thinking and to ensure the Marine Corps's relevance, which meant strengthening its ties to the Navy. Gray had recognized that changes in the political and military environment would allow the Marine Corps to reach parity with the Navy. In short, one of the Navy's most innovative strategic thinkers in the immediate post-war years was, in fact, a Marine—Al Gray.

The focus of Kelso's protégé, Vice Admiral Miller, was on the fleet's size and structure. In retrospect, it must be noted that Miller's ideas about tailoring naval forces, the regional CINCs' presence requirements, and engaging in humanitarian assistance, nation-building, peacekeeping, counterterrorist, counterinsurgency, and CINC-directed security assistance efforts were remarkably prescient, none more so than the need for a "credible surge capability," which was realized only after 9/11. But these ideas were not unified into a coherent vision.

⁵⁶ Elaine Sciolino, "Washington at Work; Stoic, Stubborn Admiral Is Guiding Navy in a Stormy Time of Changes," *New York Times*, December 5, 1989.

Navy strategists further down the chain of command were palpably uncomfortable with the silence and lack of urgency emanating from their senior leaders about the need to re-rationalize the Navy and provide a new conceptual framework for the fleet. It was they and not Navy leaders who picked up on the Marine Corps's new thinking as a way to broaden how the Navy represented its capabilities in following the threat ashore while still retaining a global vision.

From the interaction of these agendas, two trends emerged. The first was the increasingly intimate Navy-Marine Corps collaboration. While both services had always been in the Navy Department, few admirals at any time had ever envisioned anything resembling strategic or even rhetorical equality with the Marine Corps. The Cold War saw the Navy dealing with a wide variety of complex, mostly technology-intensive warfare areas—anti-submarine, anti-aircraft, anti-ship, electronic, strike, nuclear deterrence, intelligence gathering, and so on—only a few of which required a relationship with the Marine Corps, and sea control, the Navy's primary concern, not at all. From the Navy's view, the Marine Corps's amphibious warfare mission represented “one half of one-eighth” of these global warfare responsibilities. To the Navy, the Marines, with their demands on the Department of the Navy's budget, were themselves “rice bowlers.”⁵⁷

In the post-Cold War era, however, the Marine Corps helped the Navy define a new threat, having lost the Soviet navy, and follow it ashore, which strengthened the Navy's institutional flanks. Power projection (i.e., naval strike warfare and amphibious assaults) became the name of the game. For the Navy this meant above all an emphasis on naval strike warfare as an essential element of the expeditionary operations that the Marine Corps claimed as its own. As evinced in *Warfighting*, the Marine Corps's way of thinking held a certain methodology, a certain theoretical basis of understanding about how to approach open questions that Navy officers lacked, and which made Marines particularly invaluable and, as in this case, influential in times of conceptual confusion. However, the partnership bent the direction of U.S. naval strategy from a global

⁵⁷ Swartz, discussion with the author.

perspective toward the Marines' focus on the operational art of warfare and the battlefield, neither of which required a deeper understanding of the Navy's strategic purpose.

Moreover, the direction the Marine Corps drove towards was to ensure the survival of the Marine Corps as an institution. As one former commandant noted, the Marine Corps is a profoundly "paranoid" institution, paranoid in the sense that the other services, including the Navy, and U.S. officials wanted to stamp it out of existence.⁵⁸ The Marine Corps had learned to adapt politically and militarily to ensure its survival, which included establishing sponsorships in Congress. Many had argued that the nation did not need a Marine Corps—few other nations have one on anything like a comparable scale, after all. It was the Marines' imperative to get the nation to *want* a Marine Corps. The paranoia was understandable before the Second World War, but not afterwards as the Marine Corps became the only service whose end-strength and organization were congressionally mandated.

One has other reasons to wonder if the Navy had done due diligence in selecting the Marine Corps as its post-war partner. As the Marines' saying goes, there is a right way of doing things, a wrong way, and the Marine way. Marines are dogmatic. They are not disposed to yielding their positions, and make every effort to advance their way of thinking, which is all about the operational art and the battlefield, and not about understanding the assumptions behind them. For the Navy, whose way of thinking was much looser and contingent, and whose representatives did not worry about articulating the Navy's thinking in the form of doctrine, this meant that achieving consensus with the Marine Corps would invariably be a tortuous, frustrating, and drawn-out task.

The other trend that emerged was the Navy's desire to put the *Maritime Strategy* behind it. As CNO Trost found out, the problem lay in the way Americans understood or, more precisely, remembered, the Cold War. As Trost noted, Congress did not concern

⁵⁸ General Charles C. Krulak, U.S. Marine Corps (Ret.), interview by Terry Terriff, March 10, 2004. Terriff, "Innovate or Die," 483.

itself much with how the Navy employed its forces in peacetime or how they enabled the production of systemic benefits. The Navy's purpose was understood in terms of its wartime roles, which meant that the safest and surest avenue to success in the budget wars on Capitol Hill was to justify its weapons systems in the context of war with the Soviets. After the end of the Cold War, Trost had tried to defend the fleet's size and structure by explaining the relevance of the "lesser included missions." But Congress would have none of it. As with "A Maritime Strategy for the 1990s," only a Cold War metric was used to judge the Navy. To Congress, the Soviet threat's disappearance meant that the Navy did not much need many of its platforms and weapons systems anymore, and attempting to justify them with lesser included missions was taken as mere stonewalling in a lame attempt to protect a bloated force structure.

By the time Kelso took over, the *Maritime Strategy* had in his eyes become an albatross. It was doomed along with the 600-ship navy to which it was inextricably linked in the minds of legislators and defense officials alike. "The Way Ahead" declared the *Maritime Strategy* to be, for all intents and purposes, a Cold War relic; it was still "on the shelf," and destined to remain there. The apparent ease with which the once dearly held *Maritime Strategy* was mercilessly euthanized said much about the political imperative to adapt at whatever risk to the Navy's institutional cohesion. Like CNO Arleigh Burke in the 1950s, Kelso may have hoped to get by with an internal "policy" instead of a lightning-rod "strategy," a term that was now increasingly the purview of OSD and the Joint Staff. Keeping one's head down and focusing on the details may have seemed the path of least resistance. The 1990–91 Gulf War, however, rendered all such temporizing calculations irrelevant. After it had been fought and won, the Navy would again be weighed in the balance, and obliged to explain itself once more.

V. ...FROM THE SEA, 1991–92

A. THE GULF WAR: CATALYST FOR DISTRACTION

Operation Desert Storm began on January 17, 1991 with a massive round-the-clock air assault that lasted forty-three days. The advent of twenty-four hour cable news and real-time satellite communications highlighted the U.S. military's advanced technology. Americans watched in-flight footage in rapt fascination as Air Force jets destroyed Iraqi aircraft bunkers, command and communications facilities, dug-in tanks, and narrow bridges with laser-guided bombs. They marveled at how the Air Force's F-117 stealth fighters flew over heavily defended Baghdad with impunity to deliver their laser-guided bombs with pinpoint accuracy, and how the Army's modern tanks and attack helicopters decimated the Iraqi army in a three-day ground offensive.

For the Army and the Air Force, whose doctrines were severely taken to task in the Vietnam War, the Gulf War was a redemptive victory like no other, which further amplified its apparent lessons. Richard Hallion summed up the belief of many that "The Persian Gulf War will be studied by generations of military students, for it confirmed a major transformation in the nature of warfare: the dominance of air power.... Simply (if boldly) stated, air power won the Gulf war."¹ Air power had at last become "decisive."

The Gulf War was also viewed as the first major test of Goldwater-Nichols, and was seen to have passed with flying colors. The war "validated" how Goldwater-Nichols had empowered the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff and the CINCs and centralized the command structure thereby forcing the Services to operate more closely with each other. Neither President George Bush nor Secretary of Defense Dick Cheney micromanaged the war. In his advisor capacity, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs General Colin Powell worked closely with both, and emerged as the administration's front man for the war, polished, articulate, and clearly in the know. In contrast to Vietnam, Desert

¹ Richard Hallion, *Storm over Iraq* (Washington, DC: Smithsonian, 1992), 1.

Storm's field commander, Army General Norman Schwarzkopf, the head of U.S. Central Command, controlled every aspect of the war effort. Centralization continued in the management of the air campaign. To plan and execute it, the Air Force had installed a rigid centralized planning and execution process that forced the Services to integrate administratively and operationally, which was also seen as a key to the victory.

The conflict vindicated President Bush's liberal internationalist outlook. American actions were justified in terms of supporting international norms governing national sovereignty, human rights, and global order. In this respect, Bush sought to manage the crisis in a way that would establish a precedent for how the international community would handle conflict in the post-Cold War era.² The Gulf War validated Bush's focus on regional threats as the center of his strategic outlook and on the need for crisis response and forward presence in areas of U.S. interest. For its part, Congress did not see fit to adjust the numbers of ships, Army divisions, Air Force air wings, or active personnel in the Base Force.³ As Paul Wolfowitz had foreseen, the high-tech weapons systems had offset the manpower advantages of aspiring regional powers. In short, the war essentially ended the debate with Congress on the direction of U.S. strategy.⁴

The centrality of regional war in U.S. strategy brought to the forefront the expeditionary and power-projection roles of the Army and the Air Force. This was good news for the Army and the Air Force, which had lost most of their rationale with the end of the Cold War. The Navy, on the other hand, had to all appearances merely played a supporting role in a conflict that was now viewed as the template for how the U.S. military would be designed and used. Given its all too familiar marginalized status, the problem for Navy leaders now was how to re-rationalize the sea service and reassert the institution's relevance.

² George Bush and Brent Scowcroft, *A World Transformed* (New York: Knopf, 1998), 491.

³ Don M. Snider, *Strategy, Forces and Budgets: Dominant Influences in Executive Decision Making, Post-Cold War, 1989–91* (Carlisle Barracks, PA: Strategic Studies Institute, U.S. Army War College, February 1993), unpaginated, PDF, 30.

⁴ See Snider, *Strategy, Forces and Budgets*, 28–29.

B. ...IN THE MEANTIME

There was, however, little interest among Navy leaders in addressing that problem.⁵ During the Gulf War, Vice Admirals Paul David Miller, deputy CNO for Naval Warfare (OP-07), and Robert Kelly, the deputy CNO for Plans, Policy, and Operations (OP-06), were promoted to four-star rank and took command of the U.S. Atlantic and Pacific Fleets, respectively. Miller took with him many of his key officers from Naval Warfare (OP-07), whose influence waned after his departure. Kelly's replacement, Vice Admiral Leighton W. "Snuffy" Smith Jr., another carrier aviator, was not arriving until July 1991, a gap of seven months. Kelly's deputy filled in, but was reluctant to start major projects because he too was transferring. In June 1991, General Al Gray retired and was replaced by General Carl Mundy. In the spring of 1991, Captain Dick Diamond's immediate boss, Rear Admiral Edward "Ted" Baker, the director of the Strategy, Plans and Policy Division (OP-60), arranged to get Diamond in front of CNO Frank Kelso and the barons in mid-July 1991 ostensibly to present the strategic introduction to a top-level assessment of overall Navy programming. Instead, Diamond gave the brief that Navy and Marine Corps strategists had been working on for over a year.

In the meantime, the Navy was coming under increasing criticism about its wartime performance.⁶ Its aircraft were said to have had difficulties hitting targets because the Navy, unlike the Air Force, did not have enough precision-guided munitions, owing to a shortage of laser-guided bombs.⁷ Its in-flight visual recorders were either incompatible or too old for use by the television networks.⁸ Defending the ships in the

⁵ Paragraph based on Captain E. Richard Diamond Jr., U.S. Navy (Ret.), discussion with the author, March 25, 2011, Washington, DC.

⁶ See John M. Broder and Melissa Healy, "Allied Ground Push in 20 Days Foreseen," *Los Angeles Times*, February 3, 1991; Jeffrey Record, "AF's Future Bright after Stellar Gulf Showing," *Air Force Times*, March 11, 1991; and Molly Moore, "War Exposed Rivalries, Weaknesses in Military," *Washington Post*, June 10, 1991.

⁷ Nora Zamichow, "Unsung Heroes?" *Los Angeles Times*, March 17, 1991.

⁸ Ibid. Also see Rear Admiral Riley D. Mixson, "Where We Must Do Better," U.S. Naval Institute *Proceedings* 117, no. 8 (August 1991): 39.

Persian Gulf was said to have taken up 30 percent of its total sorties.⁹ The Navy's commander in the war, Vice Admiral Stanley R. Arthur, decided not to join General Schwarzkopf and the other services' commanders in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia. Instead, in accordance with Navy tradition, he stayed on his command ship in the Persian Gulf. Arthur's absence irritated Schwarzkopf, who wanted all his commanders at the command post. Schwarzkopf, who held little interest in things naval, ignored Arthur's representative in Riyadh, who was a one-star admiral, and did not trust the Navy much to follow orders.¹⁰ Navy communications were not well integrated. Operation Desert Storm's daily Air Tasking Order, which contained the day's operational tasking for U.S. and coalition aircraft, had to be flown out to the carriers each night.¹¹ The Navy did little to redress the perception that the Air Force, Army, and Marine Corps had won the war. "We just got lost in the overall picture," noted one spokesman.¹² All of this served notice that the Navy was neither prepared for "modern" war nor was on board with "jointness," which was now implicitly being defined as the Air Force's and the Army's way of doing business.

The brief that Diamond presented to Kelso and the barons in mid-July 1991 was an updated version of the one that Diamond had given to General Gray almost a year earlier.¹³ Within minutes, however, Kelso flew into a rage. He cursed and attacked every recommendation in the brief, particularly the one that advocated reducing the number of submarines. Things went from bad to worse with a slide entitled "The Coming USN Budget Train Wreck." The next day, however, Kelso called Diamond into his office. He

⁹ Melissa Healy, "Navy Riding Out Storm of Criticism of Gulf War Role," *Los Angeles Times*, April 28, 1991.

¹⁰ See Marvin Pokrant, *Desert Storm at Sea: What the Navy Really Did* (Westport, CT: Greenwood, 1999), 283–285.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 273–274.

¹² Zamichow. "Unsung Heroes?" For how the Navy could rectify its image problem, see Captain Will P. Gray, "Tell the Story of Naval Aviation in the War," U.S. Naval Institute *Proceedings* 117, no. 7 (July 1991): 107–108.

¹³ Diamond, discussion with the author.

told Diamond that after a troubled night of sleep, he agreed that the Navy needed to head in the direction that Diamond had recommended, which was to frame the two services' purpose in terms of expeditionary warfare in the littoral environment and as the nation's crisis-response team. And he thanked Diamond for telling him what he needed to hear. The CNO also told him that Vice Admiral Smith, who had taken over as deputy CNO for Plans, Policy, and Operations (OP-06) days earlier, would oversee the development of a new vision. When Diamond relayed the message to Smith, the admiral noted, "Diamond, I hear you have done some good work around here, but this ain't it. Based on my thirty-five years of experience, I can assure you that this here littoral warfare crap ain't never gonna fly in this man's Navy."¹⁴

C. THE NAVAL FORCE CAPABILITIES PLANNING EFFORT

The project to develop a new strategic concept started in October 1991 and ended in March 1992. It was one of the Navy's most organized and lengthy efforts to develop a strategic document in the post-Cold War era. The project was known as the "Naval Force Capabilities Planning Effort." Its purpose was to produce a report that defined in "simple" and "direct" terms the "strategic concept" for how sea power would be employed under contemporary conditions and the capabilities required to realize that concept.¹⁵ The report was to lay the groundwork for a strategic statement that would be signed by the secretary of the Navy, the CNO, and the commandant of the Marine Corps.

The term "strategic concept" has a special meaning in the Navy. Samuel Huntington defined it in a 1954 article of his entitled "National Policy and the Transoceanic Navy," which was popular among Navy leaders throughout the post-Cold War period.¹⁶ Huntington defined a strategic concept as a statement of a service's

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ "Final Report of the Naval Force Capabilities Planning Effort": Enclosure (2), "Briefing Slides and Text" (Alexandria, VA: Center for Naval Analyses, March 23, 1992), unpaginated, slide 6.

¹⁶ Samuel P. Huntington, "National Policy and the Transoceanic Navy," U.S. Naval Institute *Proceedings* 80, no. 5 (May 1954): 483–493.

fundamental purpose or role, which, he asserted, is to implement national policy. He warned that if a service lacks a well-articulated strategic concept,

It becomes purposeless, it wallows about amid a variety of conflicting and confusing goals, and ultimately it suffers both physical and moral degeneration....[And] the public and the political leaders will be confused as to the role of the service, uncertain as to the necessity of its existence, and apathetic or hostile to the claims made by the service upon the resources of society.¹⁷

Huntington's strategic concept was a tool to rationalize the Navy for political purposes and provide the fleet with a compelling conceptual framework to maintain the cohesiveness needed by a fighting force. But it did not constitute a strategy.

The Naval Force Capabilities Planning Effort was to be a bottom-up review.¹⁸ Nothing was sacred. The participants were encouraged to think creatively and not simply parrot the positions of their respective warfare communities and staffs. To encourage creative thinking, all the internal debates were on a not-for-attribution basis.¹⁹ The Naval Force Capabilities Planning Effort had three phases, all of which were conducted at the Center for Naval Analyses located a few miles south of the Pentagon. Vice Admiral Smith and his counterpart, Lieutenant General Henry Stackpole, led the effort. A committee of five flag officers called the "Gang of Five," which consisted of two Marine generals and three rear admirals, oversaw it. The latter were Richard C. "Sweetpea" Allen, a carrier aviator who headed the Assessment Division (OP-81) in Navy Program Planning (OP-08), David R. Oliver Jr., a submariner who headed the Programming

¹⁷ Ibid., 483.

¹⁸ Ferd V. Neider and Thomas P. M. Barnett noted that although there were several efforts to develop the "future vision," "this particular effort was distinguished by the fact that it was personally tasked by SECNAV [the secretary of the Navy] as the zero-based capabilities study effort within the department." Neider and Barnett, "Memorandum for the Record," cover letter to "Final Report," 1. As Captain Edward A. Smith Jr., U.S. Navy (Ret.) noted, "The effort was formally blessed as the Department of the Navy's 'highest priority.'" Edward A. Smith Jr., "'...From the Sea': The Process of Defining a New Role for Naval Forces in the post-Cold War World" in Peter Trubowitz, Emily O. Goldman, and Edward J. Rhodes, *The Politics of Strategic Adjustment: Ideas, Institutions, and Interests, New Directions in World Politics* (New York: Columbia University, 1999), 270.

¹⁹ Ibid., 270–271.

Division in OP-08, and Ted Baker, the head of OP-60, a surface officer. Several Center for Naval Analyses' analysts were also involved, notably Thomas P. M. Barnett, a PhD who was one of the few that participated in the plenary and leadership sessions for all three phases.²⁰

In general, the group was comprised of Navy commanders and captains and Marine Corps lieutenant colonels and colonels. They were not from just the Navy or Marine Corps's strategy shops or the Marines' doctrine command—the Marine Corps Combat Development Command. They came from their respective programming and budget offices, and, in Phase II, from operational staffs. As noted by Captain Edward A. Smith Jr., an intelligence officer with a PhD from American University who participated in the first two phases, “there was a conviction that the answers sought needed to spring from those most familiar with the capabilities and limitations of naval power—experienced naval officers.”²¹ In other words, the “answers” were to come from Navy officers whose basis of knowledge was predominantly operational experience and from Marines whose intellectual framework was all about warfighting.

1. Phase I: The Transitioneers, Big Sticks, and Cold Worriers

Phase I started in late October 1991 and ended in late December 1991. It consisted of eighteen officers from OPNAV, Headquarters Marine Corps, and the Marine Corps Combat Development Command. According to their guidance, they were to assess what had changed in the strategic environment and what that implied for the roles and missions of U.S. naval forces.²² Almost immediately, the group divided into three camps, the result of a brief given by William H. J. “Bill” Manthorpe Jr., the deputy director of

²⁰ Thomas P. M. Barnett, *The Pentagon's New Map: War and Peace in the Twenty-First Century* (New York: G.P. Putnam's Sons, 2004), 65.

²¹ Smith, “Process of Defining a New Role,” 297.

²² *Ibid.*, 269.

the Office of Naval Intelligence.²³ Manthorpe, a retired Navy captain, had determined that historically the interval between the end of one threatening global “empire” and the rise of another was twenty years, which meant the next one would materialize around 2011. If not the Soviets, it would be some Eurasian power or a coalition. Independent of that cycle, there was a continuous low level of conflict brought about by the “rest-of-the-world” threats that periodically precipitated crises for the great powers. Extrapolating from Korea (1950–53), Vietnam (1965–75), and the Gulf War (1990–91), he calculated the interval between crises to be fifteen years, which meant the next one would be around 2005. Manthorpe’s analysis implied that the United States had some breathing space before the next global threat emerged and could therefore focus on the rest-of-the-world threats for the time being.²⁴

Each of the camps migrated to an area on Manthorpe’s curve that it thought was the most important, while the curve itself became the Rorschach test by which all of the effort’s draft visions were tested.²⁵ (See Figure 1.) As labeled by Tom Barnett, the three camps were the *Transitioneers*, the *Big Sticks*, and the *Cold Worriers*. The *Transitioneers* focused on the left side of the curve, where Soviet intentions and capabilities were declining and rest-of-the-world threats were blossoming, no longer as restrained by superpower pressures as during the Cold War. The *Transitioneers* were the cops on the beat, the community organizers, and the world’s ubiquitous “911” force. The *Transitioneers* believed that local operations mattered, that the aggregated effects of local day-to-day constabulary missions and coercive diplomacy operations were translated directly into effects at the strategic level. The *Transitioneers* wanted to deal with all the rest-of-the-world threats. Their view reflected the promise and optimism that only the

²³ Rest of paragraph based on Barnett, *Pentagon’s New Map*, 8–106 and Captain William H. J. Manthorpe Jr., U.S. Navy (Ret.), “A Review and Personal Reflections On: *The Pentagon’s New Map: War and Peace in the Twenty-first Century*,” Part I and II, *Naval Intelligence Professionals Quarterly* 22 (Fall 2005): 25–28 and 23 (Winter 2006): 50–54, respectively.

²⁴ Manthorpe, “Review and Personal Reflections,” 53.

²⁵ Following three paragraphs based on Barnett, *Pentagon’s New Map*, 63–70 and 98–106 and Thomas P. M. Barnett and Henry H. Gaffney, “It’s Going to Be a Bumpy Ride,” U.S. Naval Institute *Proceedings* 119, no. 1 (January 1993): 23–26.

United States could ensure a safe transition out of the Cold War and the construction of a new order, which would prevent the onset of the next global threat. The *Transitioneers*, with their expeditionary mindset, sought a high operating tempo, forward deployments, and larger numbers of lower-cost ships, the twenty-first century equivalent of the Victorian gunboat. For the *Transitioneers*, who were predominantly surface officers and Marines, future strategy was all about presence, influence, and providing stability. It was about how to use the military as a day-to-day instrument to meet U.S. economic, political, and diplomatic goals. Their outlook reflected the nature of how the surface community and Marine Corps operated, which was at a more local level than those of the *Big Sticks* and the *Cold Worriers*.

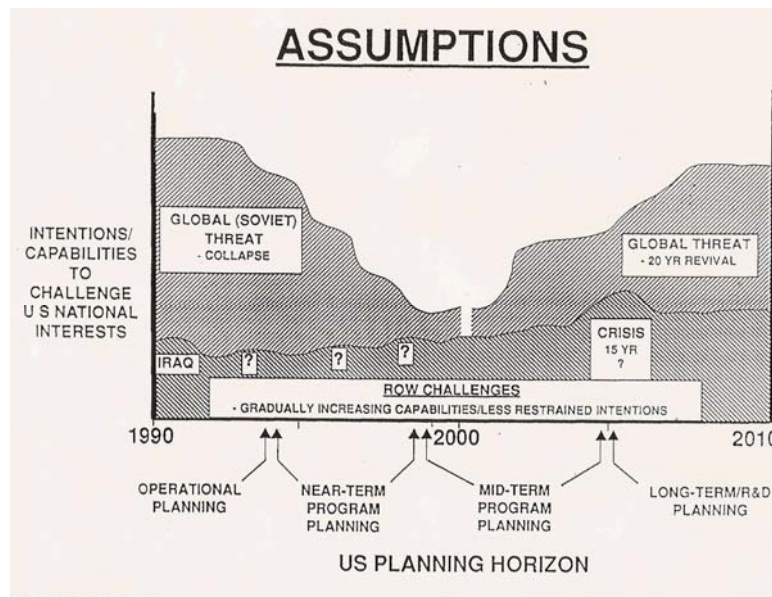


Figure 1. The Manthorpe Curve²⁶

The *Big Sticks* (as in “walk softly...”) believed that their preferred force structure platforms of carriers, Tomahawk-armed cruisers, and amphibious assault ships were versatile enough to make them relevant in any part of Manthorpe’s chart. The *Big Sticks*

²⁶ Courtesy of Captain William H. J. Manthorpe Jr., U.S. Navy (Ret.).

believed that high operating tempos and tackling every rest-of-the-world threat would exhaust the military and erode its assets. Their approach was more selective. Like a SWAT team, their navy would handle select rest-of-the-world challenges, notably regional powers, whose pummeling would deter other regional threats and prevent them from becoming global threats. *Big Sticks* were mainly carrier aviators, but had a few Marines and surface officers as well. The *Big Stick* view reflected the experiences of carrier aviators, who worked their magic from offshore. Carriers never needed to venture close ashore—so effective was their emotive impact and ability to convey U.S. resolve. The carriers had a presence like no other U.S. platform, and this had not changed since the passing of the Cold War. The size of the carriers prevented them from working more at local level. In other words, they could not put into many ports or work closely with ships of other navies, many of which were essentially coast guards. The *Big Sticks* were willing to accept the inefficiencies involved in using high-end platforms for lesser-included missions like boarding operations to keep the fleet's capabilities within the “sweet spot” of preparedness for general war.

Finally, the *Cold Worriers* focused on the right side of the curve. They argued that rest-of-the-world threats did not pose an *existential* threat to the United States, in other words, a threat that could destroy the nation in the course of an afternoon. Only global threats were existential, and their rise was inevitable. For the *Cold Worriers*, the post-Cold War period was merely an interlude. In the meantime, pending the rise of the next existential threat, the United States needed to make hay technologically. Addressing rest-of-the-world threats would only drain the nation's coffers and divert its attention. These funds would be better spent investing in the military's future, not squandered on present quagmires, whose strategic relevance was doubtful. They worried (hence “Worriers”) about the next existential threat, and thus wanted the nation to focus on developing revolutionary high-end “silver bullets,” and otherwise keep its powder dry and resist the temptation to remake the world. The *Cold Worriers* were, for the most part, submariners. For the first time since the 1960s, the submariners' entitlement was being questioned, and

they worried about that too. By the looks of those submariners participating in the project, they were clearly not happy about losing their dominant position in the Navy.²⁷

The chief concern among visiting congressional staffers was the growing importance of what would come to be known as globalization, which they said would be a transformative force, but one whose effect on the military's role seemed uncertain.²⁸ The staffers emphasized that the network of interests and trade resulting from interdependence would become central to U.S. economic power, whose importance would rival if not exceed that of U.S. military power.²⁹ Yet as Smith pointed out, "The military or naval connection to national economic security, however, was not made clear in contemporary policy or academic writings."³⁰ It was a revealing statement, one that noted not just the lacunae of political thinking and academic research on the topic, but also the fact that Navy officers did not think it their responsibility to have articulated that relationship.

From the participants' perspective, U.S. economic interests were related to regional stability, which meant traditional crisis deterrence and crisis response missions were now more important. Interdependence also meant states were more vulnerable to outside economic pressures like blockades. Securing access to resources and markets in a time of war was one thing, but, as Smith noted, "securing peacetime access carried unsavory connotations of gunboat diplomacy of the nineteenth century, something that would have no place in the twenty-first."³¹ Instead, the group, which generally favored Bush's liberal-internationalist outlook, called for a "subtler" U.S. overseas presence, noting that U.S. naval forces have an indirect, but important effect on U.S. economic interests. But there was little understanding of what forward presence meant apart from

²⁷ Barnett, *Pentagon's New Map*, 76.

²⁸ Smith, "Process of Defining a New Role," 278.

²⁹ Ibid.

³⁰ Ibid.

³¹ Ibid., 279.

being in a position to respond to a crisis or to deter. Nor was there much understanding of how it “worked” to bring stability, if it worked at all. In the end, the group determined that the range of instabilities that could upset the U.S. economy was too broad for the naval services to operate as a “global policeman.” From the group’s perspective, the Navy’s diplomatic and warfighting roles remained preeminent over its constabulary one.³²

In the conclusion of the final report’s Global Economy section, Barnett and Jack Mayer noted that global integration needed to be factored into U.S. strategy, but offered only generalities.³³ Their conclusions had a regional flavor. American dependency on trade was expected to grow, but seaborne transportation routes might shift, as the Suez Canal grew in importance while that of the Panama Canal diminished, for example. There also was a clear link between regional stability and U.S. business investment, which required military cooperation with local governments. Additionally, Barnett and Mayer noted that much of U.S. trade, notably petroleum, either originated in or traveled through the Middle East and Asia. These were two areas where the U.S. government relied heavily on U.S. naval power. They asserted that U.S. naval forces could play an important practical and symbolic role in demonstrating how the United States is committed to ensuring stability in the Middle East and Asia.

In the end, however, Barnett and Mayer conceded that “It is not possible to gain a firm grasp of how big a naval force is needed to generate clear benefit to the U.S. economy through promotion of regional stability.” They continued, noting,

In fact, the clearer argument for the U.S. maintaining its forces remains in mitigating the effects of political fragmentation rather than encouraging economic integration....This only points up the indirect impact of military power in bolstering regional stability.³⁴

³² Ibid., 280.

³³ “Final Report”: Enclosure (5), “The Global Economy,” 1.

³⁴ Ibid., 8.

Barnett and Mayer were clearly struggling to understand just how the Navy realized systemic benefits. They were operating in virgin territory; during the Cold War, neither the civilian strategists, political scientists, economists nor the Navy for that matter had ever addressed the Navy's systemic effects.

2. Phase II: The Warfighters versus the Policy Wonks

Phase II started as scheduled in early January 1992 with the goal to develop a strategic concept in the form of a draft white paper.³⁵ But it ended in late February as a hung jury, which necessitated a third phase. The Phase II group swelled to forty officers, the additions coming from the numbered fleet staffs (e.g., the U.S. Sixth Fleet) and the Navy component commanders' staffs and the Marine equivalents. As Captain Smith noted, Phase II was "to include a full spectrum of operational experience and representatives from the fleets and Navy theater commanders [e.g., U.S. Naval Forces Europe] and to ensure that all segments of the Naval Service participate actively in the final product."³⁶ Although some of the additions were part of the Navy's strategy community, most were not, which meant the group's basis of knowledge was even more operational and its focus even more on warfighting than was Phase I's.

The arguments in Phase II were about warfighting versus peacetime requirements, and just how to justify forward deployment. Unlike warfighting, there was little clarity or consensus about "non-kinetic" naval purposes, which had not taken center stage in the *Maritime Strategy*. Consequently, as Smith noted, "there was a strong tendency...to focus solely on the familiar aspects of 'warfighting' and to treat all other peacetime functions as lesser included cases, operations any force equipped for war would surely be able to undertake."³⁷ On one side were the Navy "operators" and Marine "warriors." They did not understand the Navy's purpose in terms of peacetime missions, and argued that any

³⁵ Smith, "Process of Defining a New Role," 270.

³⁶ Ibid., 269.

³⁷ Ibid., 287.

attempt to base it on anything but warfighting would “jeopardize” the acceptance of the new vision in the fleet.³⁸ On the other side were, in Smith’s words, the “Washington political-military wonks,” which included most of the Navy’s strategists and Barnett.³⁹ The wonks sought to build a consensus about the importance of “peacetime” requirements like presence, crisis response, and coercive diplomacy, and how such missions influenced and deterred threats and rationalized forward deployment.

The wonks were swimming upstream. Discussions with staffers from the House Armed Services Committee as well the white papers of its chairman, Congressman Leslie “Les” Aspin Jr. (D-WI), revealed to the Phase II participants that few in Congress understood the worth of naval missions short of war.⁴⁰ “The primary reason Americans want military forces,” as Aspin noted, “is to have the option of fighting when other means fail.”⁴¹ Captain Bradd C. Hayes, who headed U.S. Naval Forces Europe’s strategy shop and was a Phase II addition, noted, “The working group wrestled with ways to convince Congress and the public of the importance of tasks short of conflict conducted by forward-deployed forces.”⁴²

However, congressional staffers and other non-naval officials *did* understand the merits of forward deployment in terms of one kind of peacetime mission—crisis response, in which they conceded, naval forces played a leading if not preeminent role.⁴³ But as a whole, the group lacked conceptual understanding about that as well. As Captain Smith noted,

³⁸ Ibid., footnote 9.

³⁹ Ibid.

⁴⁰ Captain Bradd C. Hayes, “Keeping the Naval Service Relevant,” U.S. Naval Institute *Proceedings* 119, no. 10 (October 1993): 59.

⁴¹ Congressman Les Aspin Jr. (D-WI), remarks, “National Security in the 1990s: Defining a New Basis for U.S. Military Forces” (Atlantic Council of the United States, New York, January 6, 1992), 6, quoted in Hayes, “Keeping the Naval Service Relevant,” 59.

⁴² Hayes, “Keeping the Naval Service Relevant,” 59.

⁴³ Smith, “Process of Defining a New Role,” 287–288.

There was no broad understanding even inside the Naval Service of the peculiar capabilities maritime forces brought to an unfolding crisis or, indeed, of why they seemed to be the instrument of choice for political leaders dealing with overseas crisis....Indeed, there was a vigorous debate even among the naval officers in the group over how, if at all, “presence” contributed to deterring crises and conflict.⁴⁴

Clearly, the group suffered from a profound lack of theoretical knowledge about the relationship between naval forces and crisis response and how presence deterred conflict.

To help its thinking, the group had the Center for Naval Analyses update one of its studies on U.S. crisis responses.⁴⁵ The updated study found that of the 325 times the military responded to crises between 1946 and 1991, only 12 percent directly involved Soviet reactions and all these cases were prior to 1981. The responses were limited in scope and duration, and generally involved forces already in the immediate vicinity. Sixty-three percent of the crises were in the Middle East. Overall, 83 percent involved naval forces. Since 1977, carriers were involved in 70 percent of the cases, the Marines 59 percent, and surface combatants only 17 percent. Reflecting upon these incidents, the group realized that the day-to-day focus of U.S. naval forces was not on open-ocean threats, but local land-based ones.

Given the new U.S. strategic approach’s focus on presence and crisis response, the group sought to leverage crisis response as a unique capability that justified forward deployment. Forward presence brought access, influence, and a swift response during a crisis. If a regional conflict was unavoidable, naval forces could “kick in the door” to secure and otherwise protect the access required to insert ground and land-based air forces.

⁴⁴ Ibid.

⁴⁵ Paragraph based on “Final Report”: Enclosure (6), “The Use of U.S. Naval Forces of Crisis Response, 1977–91,” 1–4.

Unfortunately, the group could not come to an agreement on a strategic concept, let alone the capabilities required. Amid eighteen-hour days, tempers flared and patience wore thin as deadlines loomed. As Barnett noted,

The atmosphere was incredibly tense....As the weeks dragged on without resolution, each of the Gang of Five would anoint his own personal best boy to go off on his own and try writing the magnum opus all of us knew would eventually have to be written. In each and every painful incident, the resulting personal vision was summarily rejected by the congress as a whole.⁴⁶

There were simply too many views and too little conceptual understanding beyond operational experience to structure the debate. Disagreements revolved around how much to invest conceptually (and therefore fiscally) across Manthorpe's curve and across the spectrum of warfare.

The final brief to the Gang of Five was a disaster. The admirals and generals immediately moved to another room where much yelling was overheard.⁴⁷ The following week, one of the group's participants, Colonel Thomas L. Wilkerson, the assistant chief of staff for Plans, Policies, and Operations Headquarters Marine Corps replaced Rear Admiral Baker. Wilkerson, who had recently been selected to become a brigadier general, was an adroit leader, strategic thinker, and conciliator. While assigned to Headquarters Marine Corps in the 1980s, he had helped draft early versions of the *Maritime Strategy*.⁴⁸ His understanding of Navy and Marine Corps thinking proved indispensable. He formed a core group of "renegade" thinkers led by Captain Howard "Rusty" Petrea, a carrier air wing commander. The group included Captain Hayes as well

⁴⁶ Barnett, *Pentagon's New Map*, 71.

⁴⁷ Ibid., 73.

⁴⁸ Peter M. Swartz with Karin Duggan, "The U.S. Navy in the World (1981–1990): Context for U.S. Navy Capstone Strategies and Concepts," PowerPoint brief in PDF (Alexandria, VA: Center for Naval Analyses, December 2011), 70, slide 139, <http://www.cna.org/research/2011/us-navy-world-1981-1990-context-us-navy-capstone>.

as Colonels Richard Stearns and Colonel Michael Strickland.⁴⁹ They were given two weeks to reach consensus and come up with something.

3. Phase III: Consensus

The first obstacle that Colonel Wilkerson had to overcome was convincing the Phase III group, whose ranks were depleted because many had to return to their commands, to change the definition of the fundamental purpose of naval forces from *achieving* command of the seas to *using* command of the seas. To many Navy officers, particularly those from the submarine community, achieving command of the seas was understood as an end, not a means to a greater end. Wilkerson found consensus on that question, which required assuring the Phase III group that sea control capabilities would not be abandoned since naval forces still needed to achieve local sea control in the littoral and that a peer rival could appear unexpectedly.⁵⁰ Having been handed command of the seas, the real question for the Navy now became what to do with it. Judging by the difficulties encountered in the Phase II debates, it was a question that few Navy officers had seriously considered.

The primary question that Phase III wrestled with was what part of the spectrum of warfare should the naval services now define as their purpose? To many, the Army and the Air Force had cornered the market on regional conflict and major combat operations. But such a focus did little to leverage the unique capabilities of naval forces to operate across the spectrum of warfare, or lay claim to the other elements of President Bush's strategy—presence and crisis response. So the group staked out everything but the “major conflict” portion of the spectrum, as represented by an inverted pyramid in a slide from the Naval Force Capabilities Planning Effort's brief. (See Figure 2.)

But such a move proved to be not just unpalatable, but incomprehensible to many in the group. Shifting the justification for naval power away from major combat

⁴⁹ Barnett, *Pentagon's New Map*, 71 and 78.

⁵⁰ Hayes, “Keeping the Naval Service Relevant,” 59.

operations was politically risky. Given the general understanding of Congress and the public about the military's purpose, justifying the naval services' relevance in terms of more abstract notions of crisis management, deterrence, and stability was problematic. The tried and true route to success in the budget wars was to justify weapons in the context of war, not peace. As Captain Smith had noted, no less important was the belief that such a route, which emphasized peacetime missions, was too counter-cultural for the fleet to accept.

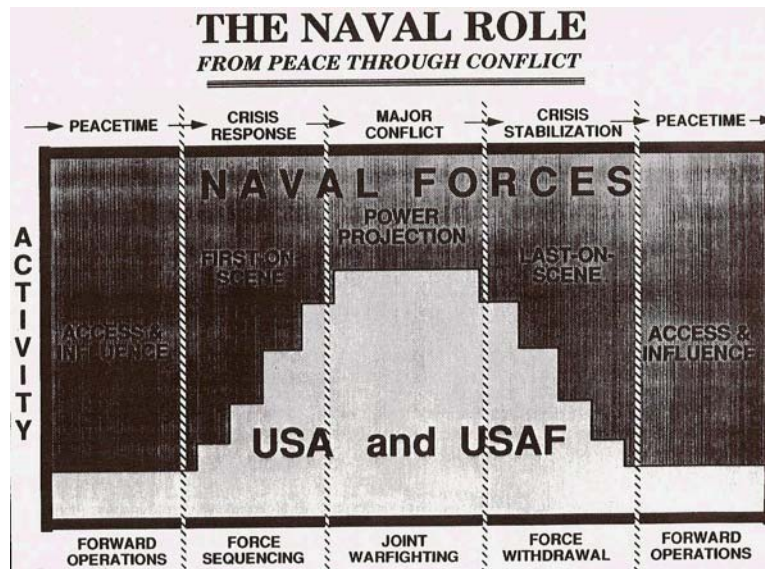


Figure 2. The Pyramid Slide⁵¹

To solve the dilemma, the group broadened the understanding of the “threat” to accord with how the Bush administration viewed it.⁵² As noted in the *National Military Strategy* of 1992, the threat was “instability and [the risk] of being unprepared to handle a crisis or war that no one predicted or expected.”⁵³ In other words, the threat was not

⁵¹ “Final Report”: Enclosure (2), “Briefing Slides and Text,” unpaginated, slide 32.

⁵² Ibid., slide 14.

⁵³ *The National Military Strategy of the United States* (Washington, DC: Department of Defense, Government Printing Office, January 1992), 4.

defined in terms of traditional confrontation and rivalry, but in terms of instability and a general sort of risk in which the threat, both military and political, arose from a failure of preparedness. The prospect of swift action was intended both to deter crises and to reassure allies and partners that any instability that would arise would be contained and not allowed to escalate in ways that threatened everyone's interests. As reflected in the *National Military Strategy*, the greatest threat to stability was thought to be regional war, which placed a premium on the deterrent value of forward-deployed forces to prevent conflict and manage crisis response.

The group's new line of thinking was reflected in the Naval Force Capabilities Planning Effort's core statement:

The fundamental purpose of Naval forces is to use command of the sea: to *protect* U.S. citizens and territory; to demonstrate U.S. commitment overseas and *promote* our interests through forward, sea-based operations; to *deter* and *contain* crises through the ability to respond rapidly with credible and sustainable sea-based forces; and, when necessary, to *project* U.S. combat power *ashore*.⁵⁴

The group sought to leverage the ability of U.S. naval forces to apply their broad and flexible capabilities across the spectrum in a way that related naval purpose to warfighting as well as broader diplomatic and economic interests.⁵⁵ The group argued that although naval forces are structured primarily for war, free access from the sea means they are well suited to influence events in times of peace. It argued that naval forces must conduct forward deployed operations and focus on the coastal or littoral areas. ("Littoral" was understood in general to be two hundred miles on either side of the shoreline.) In war, naval forces would strike targets, seize and defend ports and airfields, and otherwise enable access for the introduction of land and air forces. They provided maximum influence with minimum intrusion. They were the first on scene and the last to

⁵⁴ "Final Report": Enclosure (2), "Briefing Slides and Text," unpaginated, slide 22. Emphasis in the original.

⁵⁵ Paragraph based on "Final Report": Enclosure (2), "Briefing Slides and Text," unpaginated, slides 21–38.

leave, and did not need permanent forward bases to undertake the missions associated before and after major combat operations. The group noted that all future military operations will be “joint” (i.e., all the Services would participate in some fashion), and that joint warfare is essential to victory. The group also asserted that the Navy and Marine Corps team, with its sea-air-ground forces, was inherently integrated, and would “coordinate” with the other U.S. services. The group’s new line of thinking was reflected in its five concepts: 1) operating forward; 2) responding flexibly and rapidly; 3) enabling joint operations; 4) maneuvering from the sea; and 5) sustaining from the sea and in the capabilities required to: a) command and control U.S. naval forces; b) dominate the battlespace; c) project power; and d) sustain forces.⁵⁶

To facilitate the shift in focus from war *at* sea to war *from* the sea, the group recommended establishing new commands to develop and integrate Navy-Marine Corps warfighting concepts, doctrine, and training.⁵⁷ It recommended reorganizing naval forces into expeditionary fleet and task forces that were tailored to facilitate sharing of naval capabilities by the regional CINCs. A standing “Expeditionary Strike Fleet” would be the primary naval warfighting organization in a region, and would be commanded by the principal naval operational commander in the theater. The Expeditionary Strike Fleet’s subordinate command would be the “Naval Expeditionary Task Force,” an air-surface-ground task force comprised of a carrier, amphibious assault ships, and Tomahawk-armed ships. Commanded by a single officer, it would be tailored to specific regions where it would disperse for presence operations and mass for exercises or conflict.

Perhaps because it ran out of time, Phase III did not identify the capabilities its vision required. Its desires were clear, though: “Because of their flexibility and mobility, [U.S. naval forces] are perhaps our most versatile military assets for the spectrum of operations from forward presence through crisis response. *Therefore, naval forces should*

⁵⁶ Ibid., slide 38.

⁵⁷ Paragraph based on “Final Report”: Enclosure (2), “Briefing Slides and Text,” unpaginated, slides 71–88.

be sized and shaped to optimize their usefulness in the littoral area.”⁵⁸ This did not mean developing a budget that focused research and development on addressing the next global threat. At the least, it implied some kind of gradual reduction in open-ocean sea control assets. In all, the conclusion of the draft white paper revealed the scars and victors:

Although reasonable men can disagree, indications are that the threat of global war has been pushed off the screen into the next century. This shift in the strategic landscape allows naval forces to concentrate on littoral warfare—a major shift from “blue water” to shallow water.⁵⁹

Clearly, the *Cold Worriers* lost their case. Phase III did not propose a high-tech fleet to address the next global threat. Instead, it argued for a fleet that was forward deployed, with a measure of balance (to what extent was to be determined), and was designed in accordance with the views of the *Transitioners* and to a lesser extent the *Big Sticks*.

D. ...FROM THE SEA

The changes in the world that had occurred since the Naval Force Capabilities Planning Effort’s start continued through 1992. In December 1991, the Soviet Union was officially disestablished. Beyond that cardinal fact, however, President Bush’s New World Order was proving to be more rhetoric than reality, devoid of clear purpose or plans as far as concrete actions were concerned. Wielding immense influence, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff General Colin Powell would not support plans for military interventions overseas unless they passed an impossibly strict set of pragmatic criteria, the most notable of which was “are vital national security interests threatened?” This was of course the problem throughout the 1990s—absent the Soviet threat there was no consensus on what constituted a national interest, apart from petroleum and homeland defense.

President Bush’s approval ratings plummeted as the 1992 presidential election neared. The Democratic front-runner, Arkansas Governor Bill Clinton, had shifted the

⁵⁸ “Final Report”: Enclosure (1), “White Paper,” 17. Emphasis in the original.

⁵⁹ Ibid. Emphasis in the original.

terms of the election to the economy. His message “It’s the economy, stupid” resonated with Americans, who were increasingly indifferent to foreign affairs. Meanwhile, the Tailhook scandal was dominating the attention of Secretary of the Navy Garrett and CNO Kelso. At the Tailhook Association’s annual conference in Las Vegas in September 1990, drunken naval officers had sexually assaulted dozens of women. The scandal forced Garrett to resign in July 1992. In September 1992, Department of Defense Comptroller Sean O’Keefe took over as secretary of the Navy (1992–93). He brought considerable clout to the job, and according to Vice Admiral William A. “Bill” Owens, the deputy CNO for Navy Program Planning (OP-08), O’Keefe “saw the need to signal a dramatic change in Navy thinking.”⁶⁰

After the Naval Force Capabilities Planning Effort ended in March 1992, Captains Petrea and Smith became the principal drafters and handlers of the group’s white paper, provisionally entitled “Power from the Sea.” It was subsequently retitled “...From the Sea” to highlight that naval forces brought more than just kinetic force, but influence, deterrence, and enabling support as well.⁶¹ Throughout the summer of 1992, the authors of the white paper went through the traditional time-consuming process of sending out drafts to the four-star (and many of the three-star) admirals, incorporating their inputs, receiving guidance from Vice Admiral Smith on how to incorporate them, then sending it over to Headquarters Marine Corps, and then incorporating the Marines’ inputs before sending the penultimate draft around again for final approval. O’Keefe and his special assistant, Commander James G. Stavridis, a member of the strategy community and had a PhD from Tufts University in international relations, completed the final drafts.

Meanwhile, as the drafts circulated around OPNAV, a few senior Navy officers realized something was amiss. As Owens noted,

⁶⁰ Admiral William A. Owens, *High Seas: The Naval Passage to an Uncharted World* (Annapolis, MD: U.S. Naval Institute, 1995), 123.

⁶¹ Hayes, “Keeping the Naval Service Relevant,” 59.

Internal Navy assessments, comparing the thrust of the white paper drafts with the Navy's fiscal year 1994 program—then being prepared according to the dictates of the base force—indicated significant discrepancies between what the Navy would formally pronounce as its operational concept and the way it would propose to allocate resources when the program [of record or “POM”] went to Congress in the fall.⁶²

Something had to give. Either the Navy's budget submission or the white paper had to change. Owens pointed out that “What we needed was a new consensus on what the new Navy should be. The basic problem that summer [1992] was an absence of consensus.”⁶³ In other words, there were doubts among at least some senior Navy leaders that the Naval Force Capabilities Planning Effort represented a consensus real enough to influence resource decisions.

Finally, in late September 1992—six months after the end of the Naval Force Capabilities Planning Effort and close to three years after the fall of the Berlin Wall on November 9, 1989—the Navy laid out its first post-Cold War strategic approach. It was called ...*From the Sea: Preparing the Naval Service for the 21st Century*, and it was signed by Secretary O'Keefe, CNO Kelso, and Commandant of the Marine Corps General Mundy. ...*From the Sea* appeared in various mediums, including a news release, a four-page article in *Proceedings*, and a glossy pamphlet.

...*From the Sea* had much in common with the Naval Force Capabilities Planning Effort's white paper. It was more comprehensive and polished, and its arguments were more cogent than those of the white paper, which should not be surprising given its high level of attention. Both highlighted the unique capabilities of U.S. naval forces to operate across the spectrum of conflict. ...*From the Sea* noted that the Navy and the Marine Corps were “full participants” in Bush's strategy of strategic deterrence and defense, forward presence, crisis response, and reconstitution. In an overview statement, it noted that

⁶² Owens, *High Seas*, 123.

⁶³ Ibid.

American Naval Forces provide powerful yet unobtrusive presence; strategic deterrence; control of the seas; extended and continuous on-scene crisis response; project precise power from the sea; and provide sealift if larger scale warfighting scenarios emerge. These maritime capabilities are particularly well tailored for the forward presence and crisis response missions articulated in the President's National Security Strategy.⁶⁴

Both highlighted the Navy's operational virtues, and how they were well aligned to national policy; and both focused on the littorals.

However, somewhere between the Naval Force Capabilities Planning Effort and O'Keefe's signature, *...From the Sea* had become a different animal. Gone were arguments about U.S. economic interests in a more interdependent world. The word "trade" appears nowhere. Likewise, "stability," "commerce," and "transport" are absent. "Global" is mentioned only once, unlike "regional." Senior naval leaders had deleted discussions of a systemic nature that had animated the white paper's final drafts. Despite the belief among senior congressional staffers that economic and political integration would profoundly change the world, *...From the Sea*, as Marine Corps Major Frank Hoffman noted, "studiously ignores presence and peacetime tasks in support of political and economic objectives."⁶⁵ In short, *...From the Sea* had become more politicized, more attendant to the realities of domestic politics.

...From the Sea focused on major combat operations, high-tech power projection, and warfighting. Naval leaders were not about to yield the field of major conflict to the Army and the Air Force. The Navy and the Marine Corps were more than just doormen, more than just crisis managers. Undoubtedly, O'Keefe and Kelso worried that defining the Navy in terms other than major combat operations was politically dangerous.

⁶⁴ Secretary of the Navy Sean O'Keefe, Chief of Naval Operations Admiral Frank B. Kelso II, and Commandant of the Marine Corps General Carl E. Mundy Jr., U.S. Marine Corps, "...From the Sea: Preparing the Naval Service for the 21st Century," U.S. Naval Institute *Proceedings* 118, no. 11 (November 1992): 93.

⁶⁵ Major F. G. Hoffman, U.S. Marine Corps Reserve, "Stepping Forward Smartly: 'Forward...From the Sea,' The Emerging Expanded Naval Strategy," *Marine Corps Gazette* 79, no. 3 (March 1995): 33. He noted that *...From the Sea* "does not ignore forward presence, but emphasizes it to support transition to war and 'enabling' functions that support the introduction of heavy forces." Hoffman, "Stepping Forward Smartly," 34.

Regional conflict was the centerpiece of U.S. post-Cold War strategy. The “lessons” of the Gulf War were being applied in terms of expensive, high-tech weapons systems, which accorded with how Congress understood the military’s purpose. In this milieu, the safest, surest route to asserting the Navy’s relevance was to justify it in those terms.

...*From the Sea* also reflected the changes wrought by Goldwater-Nichols. It was about catering to the CINCs, who now had a hand in determining the requirements that ostensibly shaped the Services’ decisions and their respective weapons systems programs. It was about how U.S. naval forces provided particularly the regional CINCs with a greater range of options than could the other services. With forward deployments and a balanced fleet, U.S. naval forces promised a wider, more responsive repertoire of generic capabilities that would obviate the need for the regional CINCs to turn to the other services, with their ponderous build-ups, sovereignty issues, and societal debates. Providing capabilities to the CINCs was now seen as *the* purpose of the Services. In a sense, ...*From the Sea* was predicting (or, more precisely, betting on) a fluid and chaotic future in which particularly the regional CINCs would demand the kinds of capabilities that the naval services were offering.

Naval power projection now reigned supreme at the center of the Navy’s strategic vision. The end of the Cold War meant the Navy no longer had to attend to the requirements of global sea control. Achieving local sea control in the littorals would not be easy, however. Layered coastal defenses based on the same kinds of advanced “smart” and precision weaponry the Navy was embracing posed formidable challenges. Mine warfare had never been a Navy priority, and would now have to become one. Shallow-water anti-submarine warfare against quiet diesel submarines was problematic, as was ballistic missile defense. Achieving local sea control meant retaining large numbers of attack submarines. It meant leveraging technology in an environment that demanded a balanced set of capabilities. In other words, to be effective in supporting the landward side of the battlespace and surviving the dangers of the seaward, the Navy needed technological-tactical solutions; which is to say, it needed once more to solve the kinds of problems it liked best.

Despite the changes, ...*From the Sea* still fully represented the Marines' core thinking. ...*From the Sea* was a "strategic concept" in Huntington's sense of the term, which meant it not only rationalized the naval services, but also provided a conceptual framework compelling enough to maintain the cohesiveness needed by a fighting force. To Marines, the concept of "warfighting," like "operations" to the Navy, was a consecrated one. It was central to the Marines' identity as a fighting force. In many ways, ...*From the Sea*'s focus on littoral and maneuver warfare and warfighting in general reflected the contributions of Marine officers, and revealed the rising influence of the Marine Corps. The littoral was not a new environment for them, after all.

For the Marine Corps, ...*From the Sea* represented a fundamental change in U.S. naval strategy and the Navy-Marine Corps relationship. The absence of a naval threat meant the fleet would become the primary facilitator of the Marines' expeditionary focus. In other words, the focus on the littoral reversed the Navy-Marine Corps relationship, which was already changing because Goldwater-Nichols had shifted operational control of Marine units from the Navy's fleet commanders directly to their respective regional CINCs.⁶⁶ To the Marines, they were now the *supported* force, and the Navy the *supporting* force. To them, ...*From the Sea* was about getting the Navy to adapt materially, conceptually, and culturally to expeditionary warfare, a concept alien to most Navy officers.

To the Marine Corps, "expeditionary" was an institutional imperative, an outlook, and a mission that had shaped its organization and force structure. The Marine Corps was a harmonious, tightly integrated force that could operate on land, at sea, and in the air. But it was not designed to dominate any of these battlespaces. Within the terms of the Marine Corps tradition, "expeditionary" meant using only what you had in your rucksack and possessing a certain *joie de vivre* to secure success in trying conditions with limited resources. It meant getting your hands dirty and fixing the thorniest of problems on the periphery of Americans' attention. It meant focusing on skills and speed, and not being

⁶⁶ See Owens, *High Seas*, 101–102.

dependent on technology. To Marines, the technological-centric approach hindered effectiveness in small and limited conflicts where cultural and political factors dominated. Shifting the Navy's institutional focus onto the Marine Corps's operational space did not, in itself, ensure that these gaps in understanding and attitude would be bridged. As ...*From the Sea* noted, "Expeditionary implies a mind-set, a culture, and a commitment."⁶⁷ The term "commitment" reflected the expectation that the Navy would shift the fleet's balance toward capabilities required in the littoral and otherwise absorb the Marine Corps's outlook and culture. It meant integrating doctrine, training, and command structures. But "doctrine" was a pejorative word in the Navy. It was a major concession for the Navy to accept the Marine Corps's doctrinal approach, as reflected in the promise to establish a naval doctrine command that would alternately be commanded by a two-star admiral and Marine general.

With the Navy's emphasis on high-tech naval strike warfare as a freestanding expedient and high-tech solution on one side and the Marine Corps's emphasis on low-tech expeditionary warfare in the littoral and doctrinal integration on the other, one can already see the cracks forming in the Navy-Marine Corps partnership. Navy leaders had reengineered the white paper, and now wanted a high-tech fleet that reflected the thinking of the *Cold Warriors*, but wanted to use it for the missions envisioned by the *Transitioneers*. For the Marines, nothing had changed between the draft white paper and ...*From the Sea*. For them, the future was not so much about major combat operations as about as the messy crises that percolated under the radar, and the sort of nearly constant operations that required naval expeditionary force. The Marines were essentially *Transitioneers*, and wanted a fleet to match, which, as will be seen, they did not get.

One wonders if the Marine Corps had done due diligence in selecting its post-Cold War partner, for the Navy was an entitled, independent institution that thought about strategy in terms of resources, advanced technologies, generic capabilities, and consensus among its warfare communities. But of course the Marines knew all that,

⁶⁷ O'Keefe, Kelso, and Mundy, "...From the Sea," 94.

which required some effort to get Navy leaders to adapt to the Marines' fundamentally different way of thinking, the extent of which few Navy leaders had fully contemplated.

E. CONCLUSION

The timing of the Gulf War at the beginning of the post-Cold War era was fortuitous. Its lessons were made indelible by the redemptive victory, which many at the time believed had exorcized the demons of Vietnam, and by the need to defend the force structure against demands for a peace dividend.⁶⁸ The Gulf War was viewed as a template rather than for what it was, a *sui generis* conflict that reinforced long-standing tendencies of the American approach to strategy while obscuring its limitations behind a penumbra of tactical success. Bush's goal was to move Iraq's army out of Kuwait without leaving Iraq prostrate and unable to balance Iran. Strategic goals were essentially operational ones, which is to say they were achieved primarily by virtue of the way the war was fought.

And that way did not require the application of nuanced force or the need to occupy the country or otherwise understand cultural differences. The lack of cover and the large temperature differential at night made it easier for U.S. airborne infrared sensors to target Iraqi armor and trucks with laser-guided bombs. The open deserts and the lack of Iraqi sensors enabled rapid maneuver by large-scale armored forces. The theater's numerous port complexes and airfields were among the largest and most modern in the world. The Gulf War was, in essence, a scale-model reconstruction of the Central Front manned on the other side by an inept and inert foe. The advanced weaponry applied during the war facilitated the development of a reductionist theory of discrete destruction that promised a quick, efficient, and painless mode of warfare, one that did not unduly stress the patience of U.S. society as had the one employed in Vietnam.⁶⁹

⁶⁸ As President George H. W. Bush noted on March 1, 1991, which marked the end of hostilities of the Gulf War, "It's a proud day for Americans and by God, we've kicked the Vietnam syndrome once and for all." Ann Devroy and Guy Gugliotta, "Bush to 'Move Fast' on Mideast Peace; Cease Fire-Talks Delayed by 'Technical Details,'" *Washington Post*, March 2, 1991.

⁶⁹ See Colin S. Gray, *Explorations in Strategy* (Westport, CT: Greenwood, 1996), 83–94.

In other words, one would be hard pressed to find a scenario more suited to showcase the Air Force's and Army's Cold War capabilities and doctrine and reinforce the American way of war. It was the victory in the Gulf, and not in the Cold War—a war where most of the action was hypothetical, and the reasons for victory too ambiguous to support any service's claim of preeminence—that provided the Army and the Air Force with a strong measure of claimancy upon the direction of U.S. strategy and a solid foundation on which military theorists viewed the future. The tactical lessons derived from a forty-three day operation essentially eclipsed the more opaque strategic lessons of a fifty-year war. There was a profound lack of reflection on why the Cold War was won, or how its lessons could be applied to U.S. strategy. As Colin Gray noted, “In retrospect, the Gulf War of 1991, while arguably the first war on behalf of a new world order, was a huge distraction for American statecraft at a moment of historically rare opportunity for creative policymaking.”⁷⁰

The debates of the 1990s on how to conceptualize warfare were consequently viewed exclusively from a land- and strike-warfare perspective, in which naval forces were cast either in a supporting role or simply as platforms from which strike operations and amphibious assault operations could be mounted. In reality, the Gulf War was a benign reality that would be repeated only once in the post-Cold War era—in the brief and shining moment of the U.S.-led invasion of Iraq in 2003. After that invasion, the protracted insurgency revealed to many the perils of reductionism and doctrinal rigidity, which forced the Army and the Air Force to embark on their own post-Cold War crises of confidence.

For its part, the Navy again found itself unprepared to lay out its case or defend itself in the aftermath of the abrupt end of the Cold War and then again after the Gulf War. How the Navy handled such problems in the years immediately after the Second World War and the Cold War is striking. In each case, it assembled an ad hoc team of

⁷⁰ Colin S. Gray, *The Sheriff: America's Defense of the New World Order* (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 2004), 45.

promising officers to solve what they saw as the short-term problem of how to secure its relevance and preferred weapons systems. Admiral Arleigh Burke's comment about the state of American naval thinking in the post-Second World War years is equally applicable to these years:

People in the navy did not know very much about strategy...That's why we did not have any organization to lay out the navy's case or defend ourselves....We suffered from a lack of knowledge within the navy of what the navy was all about.⁷¹

Those involved in the Naval Force Capabilities Planning Effort had little time to understand the effects of the Navy's non-kinetic Cold War missions of presence, crisis response, and coercive diplomacy, which, ironically enough, were the types of missions that now filled the day-to-day operational lives of Navy officers. Despite decades of operating across the full spectrum of warfare with far less prejudice to the lesser uses of force than was manifest by the other services, these Navy officers, even those from the strategy community (which ostensibly did represent an organization that laid out the Navy's case), had little understanding of how naval power actually worked beyond a superficial and elementary basis.

The Navy did not turn to the Naval War College for such an understanding. As noted by John Hattendorf, Ernest J. King Professor of Maritime History at the Naval War College, "In contrast to officers in other branches of service, naval officers, by and large, have tended to ignore the value of and advantages to be found in historical insight."⁷² Few officers in the Navy's strategy community had postgraduate degrees in history or economics. Instead, their degrees were in international relations, which lent a perspective that saw the world in terms of inter-state relations and not in terms of trade, capital flows,

⁷¹ Admiral Arleigh A. Burke, U.S. Navy (Ret.), *Reminiscences of Admiral Arleigh A. Burke, U.S. Navy (Ret.): Special Series on Selected Subjects*, 4 vols. (Annapolis, MD: U.S. Naval Institute, 1979–83), 3: 146 and 4: 472–84, quoted in George W. Baer, *One Hundred Years of Sea Power: The U.S. Navy, 1890–1990* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University, 1994), 278.

⁷² John B. Hattendorf, "The Uses of Maritime History In and For the Navy," *Naval War College Review* 56, no. 2 (Spring 2003): 13.

and (as Niall Ferguson argues) economic history as the essential backdrop of all history.⁷³

Once in the hands of senior Navy leaders, the Naval Force Capabilities Planning Effort's draft changed. Given their backgrounds as CINCs, naval operational commanders, and programmers, one should not be surprised that they took a more operationally focused and politically expedient route, one that addressed how sea power would be employed, not why. To preserve its preferred force structure and style of warfare, the Navy aligned itself with the general focus of U.S. strategy on warfighting, regional conflict, jointness, and strike warfare. The last in this series of themes—strike warfare—was a capability the Navy was well positioned to embrace technologically and conceptually, and was not incongruent with the Marines' focus on the requirements of expeditionary warfare and warfighting. Such a move protected the carriers, which were now needed in the scenarios in which U.S. officials now found themselves, scenarios in which the carriers had excelled during the Cold War. The Navy staked its claim on the ability to provide the regional CINCs with a breadth of capabilities, none more important than striking targets ashore on exceptionally short notice. As in the Cold War, the gravitational pull of advanced technologies and associated operational concepts was proving to be the safest and surest route to budgetary success.

The responsibilities of understanding how operational goals realized global U.S. interests and grand strategic goals were handed to the regional CINCs, OSD, and the Joint Staff with little protest from Navy leaders who saw opportunities to demonstrate empirical evidence of naval worth. Their acquiescence facilitated the “acceptance of a single idea, a single and exclusively dominant military pattern of thought,” as J. C. Wylie had forewarned.⁷⁴ And the U.S. military's dominant pattern of thought was about

⁷³ Niall Ferguson, “The Ascent of Money,” directed by Dewald Aukema, episode 1, “From Bullion to Bubbles,” July 8, 2009 (New York, WNET, 2009), DVD. Available at <http://www.pbs.org/wnet/ascentofmoney/featured/the-ascent-of-money-episode-1-from-bullion-to-bubbles/44/>.

⁷⁴ Captain J. C. Wylie, “Why a Sailor Thinks Like a Sailor,” U.S. Naval Institute *Proceedings* 83, no. 8 (August 1957): 811.

jointness, warfighting, and how “revolutionary” precision strike and informational capabilities promised to deliver swift and decisive victories against regional threats.

The changes wrought by Goldwater-Nichols, Powell, and the Gulf War essentially relieved the Navy from the more difficult task of understanding how achieving operational goals would lead to systemic results. Such changes allowed the Navy to focus on its priorities, which including making up ground lost to the Air Force and the Army in terms of relevance and tactical and technical proficiency on the joint battlefield. It was a task the Navy did very well, but it distracted it from exploring its purpose in broader terms.

With ...*From the Sea*, the basic course of American declaratory naval strategy was set. Having solved its basic problem with a tremendous amount of time and difficulty by finding an operationally oriented common sense answer to the question of where to turn given the absence of a naval threat—that which was ashore (a fact that seemed to escape the notice of Navy leaders, who was busy heralding ...*From the Sea* as “revolutionary”), the Navy made only minor course changes in its declaratory strategy over the next dozen years.

But even as ...*From the Sea* was being published, CNO Kelso was reorganizing OPNAV and implementing a revolutionary process that undermined the expectation that ...*From the Sea* would reshape the fleet and changed the calculus by which force structure decisions were made that were only indirectly connected with the Navy’s new declaratory strategy.

VI. FORWARD...FROM THE SEA, 1993–94

A. KELSO REORGANIZES OPNAV

While naval leaders were finalizing ...*From the Sea* in the summer of 1992, CNO Frank Kelso was busy overhauling OPNAV.¹ Ostensibly, this was done to implement ...*From the Sea*, but in fact he had been contemplating it from the time he entered office.² Most previous reorganizations of OPNAV had been reactive, ad hoc affairs, a reflection of the Navy's pragmatic outlook. But Kelso sought to make the Navy's resource decision-making process more consensual, integrative, and efficient, all of which were key tenets of W. Edwards Deming. Reflecting Kelso's thinking, Vice Admiral Bill Owens, the deputy CNO for Navy Program Planning (OP-08), stated that

It was necessary to incorporate new standards, or criteria, for deciding program priorities, a new vocabulary to the debates over how to allocate the budget, and a new style of decision making. These were required, in part, to break up the old categories and compartments consistent with the earlier strategy, and in part to develop quickly a new corporate sense of direction within the Navy.³

Kelso also sought to reorganize OPNAV to strengthen the Navy's position inside the Pentagon to account for the increased power of the CINCs and the Joint Staff, something the other services had not yet considered. Indeed, Kelso's forte was in understanding how bureaucracies worked and where power resided. He was innovative, but only in a bureaucratic sense, which in the Pentagon may take one a long way, as it did here.

In the summer of 1992, the same time ...*From the Sea* was being finalized, Kelso reorganized OPNAV to match the divisions of the Joint Staff. The "OP" codes were

¹ See Peter M. Swartz with Michael C. Markowitz, "Organizing OPNAV (1970–2009)," PowerPoint in PDF (Alexandria, VA: Center for Naval Analyses, January 2010), passim, <http://www.cna.org/research/2010/organizing-opnav-1970-2009>.

² Admiral William A. Owens, *High Seas: The Naval Passage to an Uncharted World* (Annapolis, MD: U.S. Naval Institute, 1995), 123.

³ *Ibid.*, 126–127.

changed to “N” codes, meaning “Navy.” Plans, Policy, and Operations (OP-06), for example, became N3/N5, meaning it combined the functions of the Joint Staff’s J3 Operations and J5 Strategic Plans and Policy directorates, for example. Naval Warfare (OP-07), once led by Vice Admiral Paul David Miller, was subsumed into Owens’s Navy Program Planning (OP-08), which was renamed Resources, Warfare Requirements, and Assessments (N8). Naval Warfare (OP-07) had been both the integrator of requirements and arbitrator of priorities. The requirements were defined by the barons—the three-star admirals in OP-08 that presided over their respective warfare communities’ programs.⁴ Over time, the process had, as Owens noted, become a “bureaucratic drill,” which preserved the power of lower-ranking staff members to determine the fleet’s structure.⁵ To break up these fiefdoms, the barons (whose billets had already been demoted to two stars) were placed under the vice admiral in charge of N8, who was Owens, Kelso’s new point man.

Two months after Owens came aboard in July 1992, Kelso instituted a new appraisal and assessment process that raised resource decisions to a flag level and increased interaction between resource sponsors and among stove-piped offices. Instead of basing priorities on how to support *naval* warfare areas such as antisubmarine or strike warfare, they were now based on *joint* warfare areas. The program sponsors now had to justify their programs across all seven of these joint mission areas.⁶ The joint operations-based construct helped the Navy to explain its resource decisions more clearly to OSD, the CINCs, and the Joint Staff. Programs would be prioritized within each joint mission area. After that, the head of N8 chaired a series of review boards. The “chairmen” of the respective joint mission areas, of which all but two worked directly for N8, managed the priorities for the Navy’s programs within their respective area. The membership of the

⁴ These were Surface Warfare (N86), Submarine Warfare (N87), and Air Warfare (N88), which were joined by CINC Liaison (N83) and Expeditionary Warfare (N85), the latter of which was headed by a Marine two-star general.

⁵ Owens, *High Seas*, 127.

⁶ These were Joint Strike, Joint Littoral Warfare, Joint Surveillance, Joint Space and Electronic Warfare/Intelligence, Strategic Deterrence, Strategic Sealift/Protection, and Presence.

review boards—which was generally at the one- and two-star level—included a few Marine generals and admirals from elsewhere in OPNAV. For the next nine months, these admirals and generals focused on this task, meeting three times a week for hours at a time. As Owens noted, “It became the most demanding, in terms of time and concentration, of all the tasks facing the senior members of the Navy staff.”⁷

In short, Owens reconfigured the Navy’s resource decision-making process, and now largely controlled it. His rationale was striking: “The assessment process’s most important contribution was to provide *the* forum and framework for the discussions that led to the *first full consensus* on the questions raised by the end of the Cold War: what the role of naval forces was to be in the future, and how those forces would be sized, shaped, and structured.”⁸ In other words, for Owens, neither the Naval Force Capabilities Planning Effort nor ...*From the Sea* represented a “full consensus.” ...*From the Sea* was not a top-down strategy as the Marine Corps assumed, but a mere strategic concept that rationalized the Navy and its weapons systems and provided a conceptual framework for the fleet. Owens’s process, the process that determined the Navy’s budget submission, was the real “strategy,” the one that determined the role of U.S. naval forces and the fleet’s shape and size.

B. OWENS TAKES OVER

Admiral Kelso had centralized OPNAV to an unprecedented degree, and handed Vice Admiral Owens unprecedented control over OPNAV’s primary task of strategic programming, which was what “naval strategy” now boiled down to. As the authors of a RAND study noted, Owens was now responsible for no less than “the integration of concepts, requirements, budgets, resource strategy, priorities, CINC liaison, and program and resource plans.”⁹ Kelso’s reorganization “fundamentally changed the Navy’s

⁷ Owens, *High Seas*, 131.

⁸ Ibid. Emphasis added.

⁹ Leslie Lewis, Roger Allen Brown, and C. Robert Roll, *Service Responses to the Emergence of Joint Decisionmaking* (Santa Monica, CA: RAND, 2001), 54.

resource decision model from decentralized planning and programming to centralized decision-making and centralized execution.”¹⁰ Kelso had ensured that N8 had the power it needed to organize and focus OPNAV’s one- and two-star admirals on discussing and coming to an agreement on the needs of the entire Navy, a process that also decreased the need for the CNO to resolve conflict among OPNAV’s three-star admirals. N8’s power grew as did its ranks. N8 now consisted of a three-star admiral, five two-star admirals, a dozen one-star admirals, and 400 officers and civilians. Of the 1,200 personnel then assigned to OPNAV, over 400 were assigned to N8. In comparison, Plans, Policy, and Operations (N3/N5) had a much smaller, less influential staff that included a three-star admiral, a two-star admiral that was his deputy, a two-star admiral that led its Strategy, Plans, and Policy Division (formerly OP-60, now N51), and a staff that numbered less than one hundred.

The fleet that emerged from the new process conformed to the strong views of Owens. He was the first of a handful of brilliant bureaucratic managers and visionary techno-strategists that would come to dominate American naval thinking in the post-Cold War era. A 1962 Naval Academy graduate with tours on seven nuclear submarines, Owens had master’s degrees in Politics, Philosophy and Economics from Oxford University and in management from George Washington University. Owens, like another brilliant officer, Vice Admiral Art Cebrowski, had been a key member of the first Strategic Studies Group in 1981–82 that helped develop the *Maritime Strategy*. Like Kelso, Owens had been the director of Program Appraisal in the secretary of the Navy’s office and U.S. Sixth Fleet commander.

Vice Admiral Owens, like Admiral Paul David Miller, had been prominent in the final drafting of ...*From the Sea*. Owens helped overrule the *Transitioneers*’ vision of a fleet based on greater numbers of littoral-appropriate ships that relied on current technologies. Instead, he adopted a *Cold Worriers*’ approach of finding high-tech solutions to operational problems. This route proved to be the ticket to consensus among

¹⁰ Ibid., 49.

the Navy's leaders, who opted for a smaller, more balanced and high-tech fleet. In short, ...*From the Sea* was simply a means for Owens to explain the kind of fleet he had already worked out and realized through the new process.

Released in the spring of 1993, Owens's plan for the fleet of the year 2001 was entitled *Force 2001*. It had been based on the first budget estimates of the Clinton administration, and it also anticipated the results of the new administration's five-month-long "Bottom-Up Review," which, in its words, was "a comprehensive review of the nation's defense strategy, force structure, modernization, infrastructure, and foundations."¹¹ The Bottom-Up Review was an ambitious, no-holds barred look at the military. As Secretary of Defense Les Aspin noted, it was "to tackle the larger issues of service airpower roles, ground force requirements, contributions to overseas presence, the proper roles of the reserve components and responsibilities in peacekeeping."¹² The Bottom-Up Review was supposed to address sensitive topics such as the role of the Army versus the Marine Corps in expeditionary operations and the role of the Air Force and the Navy in the long-range strike warfare. The Bottom-Up Review was the second major force structure review after President George H. W. Bush's Base Force, and the first to declare that the Soviet/Russian threat was no more. As noted by Aspin, the Bottom-Up Review promised "a lean, mobile, high-tech" military.¹³ Aspin—a former McNamara Whiz Kid—promised to root out duplication and redundancy among the Services' weapons systems and capabilities to make the military more efficient.

Unlike the Base Force, the Bottom-Up Review, whose final report would come out in the fall of 1993, promised unequal cuts among the Services. That expectation only increased inter-service tension as Americans' demands for a "peace dividend" were reaching their peak. During the election, Governor Clinton had proposed to cut another

¹¹ "Report of the Bottom-Up Review," Secretary of Defense Les Aspin (Washington, DC: Department of Defense, Government Printing Office, October 1993), iii.

¹² Barton Gellman, "Aspin Gently Criticized Power Report," *Washington Post*, March 30, 1993.

¹³ Bill Gertz, "Aspin Plan Envisions 'Lean, Mobile' Military – Powell's Support not Enthusiastic," *Washington Times*, September 2, 1993.

\$60 billion over five years, on top of President Bush's \$50 billion.¹⁴ Once in office, he cut an additional \$60 billion with further cuts on the horizon, thereby exacerbating interservice competition. Adjusted for inflation, defense spending promised to decline by 40 percent. Based on the fiscal year 1990 budget, the Bottom-Up Review reduced the military by a third, compared to the Base Forces' one-fourth, at a time when the military's overseas missions were skyrocketing.¹⁵ The size of the fleet went from the Base Force's 451 (later changed to 416) to the Bottom-Up Review's 346, and the carrier fleet from 12 to 10, prompting a protest from CNO Kelso.¹⁶

By hashing out the fleet's shape and size and proposing cuts well in advance, however, Owens pleased Congress and OSD's leaders. Tailhook notwithstanding, it seemed the Navy finally had its act together. As Ronald O'Rourke noted, "The Navy now shows every sign of being ahead of the other services."¹⁷ As Vice Admiral Snuffy Smith conceded, however, the proposed cuts were motivated in part by the need "to protect to the degree we can" the 12-carrier fleet.¹⁸ Owens was not about to let the Joint Staff dictate the fleet's make-up. Still, Secretary Aspin, whose undisciplined management style was alienating many in the Pentagon, regarded Owens as a "new thinker," and developed a close relationship with him.¹⁹ In March 1994, Clinton promoted Owens to be the vice chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, the second most senior officer in the military, behind only Army General John Shalikashvili, General Colin Powell's successor as chairman.

¹⁴ See Robert J. Caldwell, "The Pentagon Drifts as Clinton Fumbles Defense Policy," *San Diego Union-Tribune*, January 23, 1994.

¹⁵ See Eric V. Larson, David T. Orletsky, Kristin J. Leuschner, *Defense Planning in a Decade of Change: Lessons from the Base Force, Bottom-Up Review, and Quadrennial Defense Review* (Santa Monica, CA: RAND, 2001), 41–42.

¹⁶ Ronald O'Rourke, "Navy Force Structure and Shipbuilding Plans: Background and Issues for Congress" (Washington, DC: Congressional Research Service, October 2, 2008), 24 and Eric Schmitt, "Top Navy Officer Criticizes Plan to Cut Carriers," *New York Times*, June 19, 1993.

¹⁷ John Lancaster, "Navy Plans Cutback of 117 Ships," *Washington Post*, May 8, 1993.

¹⁸ Art Pine, "Navy Officials Propose Deep Cuts in Fleet," *Los Angeles Times*, May 17, 1993.

¹⁹ Barton Gellman, "Rumblings of Discord Heard in Pentagon," *Washington Post*, June 20, 1993.

Much to the dismay of many in the Marine Corps (and the Navy), who were expecting a more littoral-oriented fleet structure, *Force 2001* did not change the fleet's composition much. A decrease in the number of attack submarines was the only indicator that the Cold War had ended. The fleet of amphibious ships did not grow comparatively, but took its share of cuts as well.²⁰ The Navy believed the focus of ...*From the Sea* and *Force 2001* was on leveraging technology to make strike warfare decisive and the fleet more effective across the range of missions, not on amphibious operations or expeditionary warfare in general.

C. THE RISE AND FALL OF INTERVENTIONIST ENLARGEMENT

The 1992 presidential election marked a generational change in U.S. leadership. Americans sought to put the Cold War behind them and turned to a young and optimistic president who innately understood their concerns, but had little experience or interest in national security. And Americans' concerns were all about the economy—not foreign affairs.²¹ President Clinton hoped his national security advisors would handle inherited problems in Somalia, Haiti, and Bosnia, and allow him to focus on his domestic agenda. He spent little time with this group, which General Powell thought was chronically disorganized and presented a weak image.²² They were less experienced than President Bush's national security team, which was not surprising since Democrats had been in the White House for only four of the previous twenty-four years. For Powell, Clinton's national security team was not up to the challenge; more thinkers than administrators,

²⁰ Amphibious ships comprised 11 percent of the fleet in the 1990s, which was the same as that in the 1980s. Peter M. Swartz with Karen Duggan, "The U.S. Navy in the World (1991–2000): Context for U.S. Navy Capstone Strategies and Concepts," PowerPoint brief in PDF (Alexandria, VA: Center for Naval Analyses, March 2012), 77, slide 154, <http://www.cna.org/research/2012/us-navy-world-1991-2000-context-us-navy-capstone>.

²¹ Derek H. Chollet and James M. Goldgeier, *America between the Wars, 11/9 to 9/11: The Misunderstood Years between the Fall of the Berlin Wall and the Start of the War on Terror* (New York: BBS Public Affairs, 2008), 52.

²² Chollet and Goldgeier, *America between the Wars*, 58–59 and 91; Hal Brands, *From Berlin to Baghdad: America's Search for Purpose in the Post-Cold War World* (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 2008), 105; and David Halberstam, *War in a Time of Peace: Bush, Clinton, and the Generals* (New York: Scribner, 2001), 245–247.

they did not understand how to use military force. Yet they had few reservations on its use, which frightened Powell to no end.²³ Secretary Aspin's comment that he would use force "even when vital interests were not at stake" was indicative of the administration's early interventionist view, and which worried Powell, whose outlook had been profoundly shaped by his Vietnam experience.²⁴

Clinton administration officials wanted something to replace containment. They sought a compelling conceptual framework that would rebuild consensus and organize American security and foreign policy efforts. Bush's New World Order had proved too abstract and unpersuasive. They wanted a coherent approach to guide their actions and secure domestic support, something with a simple idea and a catchy title.²⁵ From their perspective, the policy therefore had to be blanketed in the rhetoric of ideological values like democracy, human rights, and free-markets rather than a more abstract realpolitik rationale.²⁶

In the summer of 1993, "Enlargement" was unveiled as containment's successor. It was not about containing threats, but expanding market-based democracies. In a more interdependent world, American security would be improved by promoting America's "core concepts" of democracy and market economies, and by making defense cuts to enhance America's economic power.²⁷ From the administration's perspective, the new battleground was the international economy, which was now to be the focus of U.S. foreign policy. Secretary of State Warren Christopher summed up the new policy:

In an era in which economic competition is eclipsing ideological rivalry, it is time for diplomacy that seeks to assure access for U.S. businesses to expanding global markets....For too long we have made economics the

²³ Halberstam, *War in a Time of Peace*, 246–247.

²⁴ Brands, *From Berlin to Baghdad*, 105 and 107 and Halberstam, *War in a Time of Peace*, 247.

²⁵ Chollet and Goldgeier, *America between the Wars*, 71.

²⁶ Brands, *From Berlin to Baghdad*, 110 and 134–135.

²⁷ See Anthony Lake, remarks, "From Containment to Enlargement" (Paul H. Nitze School of Advanced International Studies, Johns Hopkins University, Washington, DC, September 21, 1993), <http://www.mtholyoke.edu/acad/intrel/lakedoc.html>.

poor cousin of our foreign policy....We will not be bashful about linking our high diplomatic goals with our economic goals....Support for democracy and human rights abroad can and should be a central strategic tenet in improving our security.²⁸

The Clinton administration had brought economic security and competition to the forefront of U.S. foreign policy and, ostensibly, strategy as well.

Multilateral efforts with the United Nations or NATO, for example, were key, as was the use of force. Secretary Aspin noted that the Weinberger-Powell “all or nothing” doctrine of using military force had “set the threshold for using force too high” in the post-Cold War era.²⁹ National Security Advisor Anthony Lake noted that “We should not oppose using our military forces for humanitarian purposes simply because these missions do not resemble major wars for control of territory.”³⁰

The new strategic approach was termed “multilateral intervention.” In an exchange in early 1993 about sending U.S. forces into Bosnia, Madeleine Albright, Clinton’s ambassador to the United Nations, asked Powell, “What’s the point of having this superb military that you’re always talking about if we can’t use it?”³¹ Powell, who wrote later that he almost had an aneurysm at her question, “patiently” explained to Albright that U.S. soldiers “were not toy soldiers to be moved around on some sort of global game board.”³²

This was a remarkably revealing answer. It belied Powell’s assumption that the military had only one purpose—to win wars (that have a clear political objective) with

²⁸ Warren M. Christopher, testimony to the U.S. Senate, Foreign Relations Committee. *Hearing on the Nomination of Warren M. Christopher to be Secretary of State*, 103rd Congress, 1st session, January 13, 1993, <http://dosfan.lib.uic.edu/ERC/briefing/dispatch/1993/html/Dispatchv4no04.html>.

²⁹ Brands, *From Berlin to Baghdad*, 110. The Weinberger-Powell Doctrine was a reaction against President Reagan’s interventions in the Middle East, which saw the suicide bombing of the U.S. Marine barracks in Beirut airport in 1983 that killed 241 Marines and sailors, as well as the United States’ Vietnam War experience.

³⁰ Lake, “From Containment to Enlargement.”

³¹ Elaine Sciolino, “Madeleine Albright’s Audition,” *New York Times Magazine*, September 22, 1996 and Colin L. Powell and Joseph E. Persico, *My American Journey* (New York: Ballantine, 1996), 561.

³² Powell and Persico, *My American Journey*, 561.

overwhelming force in a quick and decisive manner, which precluded the possibility that American society would turn against the war as it had in Vietnam. To think otherwise was to admit ignorance even on the part of a woman who held a PhD from Columbia University and was most recently a professor of international relations at Georgetown University. Powell, the most politically influential military leader in at least a generation, one who was instrumental in shaping the course of U.S. strategy in the post-Cold War era, had little capacity to envision the military as a more nuanced and less kinetically oriented instrument of a liberal, free-market American empire. As Colin Gray noted, “Powell... who for all his political astuteness did not have a sophisticated view of how and why force may need to be exerted (he could not transcend his Vietnam experience).”³³ Powell shared the outlook of the George H. W. Bush administration and its lack of creative conceptual skills that were necessary to develop an organizing vision about the United States’ role, particularly as the manager of the global system. These skills would have come in handy to guide a new administration that was unsure of how to relate force with political ends. They would have been useful in understanding how to move multilateral concepts of engagement and enlargement beyond mere missionary sentiments to strategic advantage.

By the summer of 1994, interventionist Enlargement was in tatters. It was the victim of mismanaged crises, hapless diplomacy, and multilateralist tensions. Clinton’s attempts to broker a deal in Bosnia using air strikes to stop Serbian atrocities fell apart. The press excoriated the president, painting him as indifferent, his team indecisive, and his Bosnian policy flip-flops as ineffective.³⁴ On October 3, 1993, armed street gangs overwhelmed a U.S. search-and-seizure mission in Mogadishu, Somalia, which was part of a larger United Nations peacekeeping effort. Despite the Americans’ high-tech gadgetry, eighteen U.S. soldiers were killed and two Black Hawk helicopters were shot down. Americans recoiled at images of cheering crowds dragging dead American soldiers

³³ Colin S. Gray, *Explorations in Strategy* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1996), 236.

³⁴ Brands, *From Berlin to Baghdad*, 120–122.

through the streets. It was a fiasco, a geopolitical knockdown, and a nightmare for Clinton, whose domestic initiatives hung in the balance. Americans extended the lessons of Vietnam to Somalia—places where there were no “clear” and “vital” interests. A week later, rioting Haitians turned back a U.S. warship delivering a thousand U.S. troops as part of a larger United Nations nation-building project. The ship sat offshore for days as the White House debated on whether to send in the troops or recall the ship. (It opted for the latter.) In April–July 1994, a genocide in Rwanda claimed the lives of almost a million Tutsis, who were hacked to death by government-backed Hutus. The world looked to the White House for action and leadership, but it was too late. Two months before, National Security Advisor Lake had laid down the new policy—“Our armed forces’ primary mission is not to conduct peace operations but to win wars.”³⁵

Efforts to spread democracy and free-market values, protect human rights, and advance other liberal economic values were discredited. Early in the post-Cold War era, Americans developed a jaundiced eye for multilateral cooperative affairs in general and humanitarian and peacekeeping missions in particular. The assumption that an overarching grand strategy was needed or could be supported domestically proved mistaken. Thereafter, Clinton adopted a more measured and flexible strategic approach, one based on selective engagements and confronting regional powers such as North Korea and Iraq. Regional conflict once again assumed a place at the center of the United States’ strategic vision.

D. BOORDA AND THE CATASTROPHE OF TAILHOOK

It is against this background of strategic uncertainty that the calamitous events at the Tailhook Association convention in the summer of 1991 must be understood. Tailhook shocked the public and shook the Navy to its core. It brought about a national discussion on sexual harassment and a high-profile referendum on the role of women in the military. It was the focus of an unremitting media frenzy that kept the Navy in the

³⁵ Anthony Lake, “The Limits of Peacekeeping,” *New York Times*, February 6, 1994.

glare of a spotlight for five years and in a state of penance for another five. It dizzied Navy leaders, dismantled their credibility, and dominated their attentions.³⁶ At the annual convention of carrier aviators held in a Las Vegas hotel in September 1991 that was attended by Secretary of the Navy Lawrence Garrett, CNO Kelso, and thirty-three other admirals, drunken naval officers sexually assaulted 90 women. The Navy's eight-month investigation was a whitewash. It identified only two suspects.³⁷ Garrett resigned in June 1992 just as ...*From the Sea* was being developed.

The Department of Defense's Inspector General took over what was to be a no-holds-barred ten-month investigation, which had all the makings of a witch-hunt.³⁸ It determined that the head of the Naval Investigative Service, the Navy's Judge Advocate General, and the Navy's civilian Inspector General had manipulated the Navy's investigation to protect senior leaders and avoid publicity. These three officials were fired. The Inspector General's report came out in April 1993 in a blaze of publicity. It accused 140 naval officers of misconduct and the Navy of a long-term leadership failure. In October 1993, the Clinton administration's Secretary of the Navy, John H. Dalton (1993–98), publicly called for Kelso's resignation, but was overruled by Secretary Aspin.

In February 1994, a Navy judge ruled that Kelso had lied about his activities at Tailhook and also manipulated the investigation. Kelso denied the accusations. But he elected to retire two months early, which set off another firestorm in Congress over whether he should be allowed to retire with four-stars. (He was.) In all, thirty admirals received administrative punishment, which ended many of their careers. Taking into

³⁶ James J. Tritten, a professor at the Naval Postgraduate School, noted that "Tailhook killed the Navy. You have this huge amount of intellectual capital in the Navy no longer being focused on where the Navy is going." Gregory Vistica, "Dead in the Water – Distracted by Shake-Up, Navy is Unable to Turn to Post-Cold War Mission," *San Diego Union-Tribune*, December 27, 1992.

³⁷ Monica Borkowski, "Chronology of a Scandal That Tarnished the Navy," *New York Times*, February 9, 1994.

³⁸ Paragraph based on Eric Schmitt, "Senior Navy Officers Suppressed Sex Investigation, Pentagon Says," *New York Times*, September 25, 1992; Michael R. Gordon, "Pentagon Report Tells of 'Debauchery,'" *New York Times*, April 24, 1993; and Eric Schmitt, "Investigation of Sex Assaults by Pilots Had to Beat Wall of Silence in Navy," *New York Times*, May 2, 1993.

account also the ten or so who were involved in the cover-up and were preemptively retired before the publication of the report, the Navy lost some 15 percent of its admirals, including some three- and four-star admirals, within a two-year period.

President Clinton selected Admiral Jeremy M. “Mike” Boorda (1994–96) to restore the Navy’s image, rebuild morale, and reestablish relations with Congress. Boorda was a skilled politician and had close ties with many in Congress. He had impressed Clinton as the commander of U.S. Naval Forces Europe and NATO Forces Southern Europe, where he successfully fused the activities of forces from the United Nations, NATO, and the United States in Bosnia. Boorda was a manpower expert, having served four tours in the Bureau of Personnel, the last as its chief. Those with backgrounds in personnel management were in ascendancy. The challenge of overseeing the massive post-Cold War personnel cuts as well as managing skyrocketing personnel costs—that were eating away at the ability of the Navy to afford ships and aircraft and finding efficiencies in what amounted to two-thirds of the budget—had increased the power of the Bureau in Navy decision making. The route to advancement now went through either N8 or the Bureau of Personnel.

Admiral Boorda was a charismatic leader and a sailor’s sailor, not the skills for which CNOs were normally selected, but which were now thought necessary. In general, CNOs are selected by the White House, the secretary of defense, the secretary of the Navy, and the outgoing CNO for the skills they bring to the Navy’s problems, which in this case was the Tailhook scandal. Like all the CNOs in the post-Cold War era, Boorda was successful in solving the problems for which he was hired, although the manner in which he eventually solved the problem of Tailhook was, as will be seen, rather unorthodox. Boorda was a surface officer, the first to serve as CNO since Admiral Zumwalt in the early 1970s, and his tenure would prove just as controversial. Boorda, who entered the Navy in 1956, was not only the first non-Naval Academy CNO, but also the first to rise from the enlisted ranks. The alternative had been Admiral Charles R. Larson, an aviator-turned-submariner, who ended up taking charge of his alma mater, the Naval Academy (for a second time), which was floundering amid its own high-profile

scandals. The Navy had enough of the submariner CNOs, whose engineering backgrounds were said to diminish their people skills and left them unprepared intellectually for the kinds of problems the Navy was facing.³⁹

E. THE IMPETUS TO UPDATE ...FROM THE SEA

In early June 1994, Secretary of the Navy Dalton directed CNO Boorda, Commandant of the Marine Corps General Carl Mundy, and Undersecretary of the Navy Richard J. Danzig (secretary of the Navy 1998–2001) to develop a new strategy. Dalton liked *...From the Sea*, but wanted a strategy that was aligned with President Clinton's first national security strategy, which was released in June 1994.⁴⁰ The administration's pillars of security, economics, and democracy had remained the same, although the strategy noted that military engagement would be selective.⁴¹ Dalton stated the new naval strategy would focus on forward presence.⁴² Dalton's problem was straightforward; as noted by his special assistant and speechwriter, Lieutenant Commander Sam Tangredi,

He truly supported the concepts of "...From the Sea," but as he told me several times, he was embarrassed trying to defend a strategy to SECDEF [Secretary of Defense] and the White House that was signed by a Republican. Finally, he gave me the task of "get me a strategy I can sign."...Critics would say that "Forward...From the Sea" was really no different than "...From the Sea" (except emphasizing forward presence). They were right. It was not meant to be different, it was meant to be signed.⁴³

As things would turn out, however, the differences between *...From the Sea* and *Forward...From the Sea* were fairly significant. But given the nuanced nature of the Navy's strategic statements, they are not readily apparent.

³⁹ Mark Thompson, "Up From the Depths – Why is the Navy Off Course?" *Time*, February 28, 1994.

⁴⁰ See John H. Dalton, "The Navy After Next," U.S. Naval Institute *Proceedings* 120, no. 8 (August 1994): 9.

⁴¹ William J. Clinton, "Statement on the National Security Strategy Report," July 21, 1994, <http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/index.php?pid=50525>.

⁴² Dalton, "The Navy After Next," 9.

⁴³ Captain Sam J. Tangredi, U.S. Navy (Ret.), email message to Peter M. Swartz, November 25, 2005.

For Boorda, however, the problem was different. He also wanted to relate force structure with forward presence. But he thought the Navy had gone too far in letting itself be defined in terms of the littoral, the more specialized mission of amphibious warfare, and, implicitly, the Marine Corps.⁴⁴ In effect, he agreed with *Force 2001*'s call for a more balanced fleet. To an extent, he shared Owens's technological fascination and emphasis on future weapons, but not necessarily at the expense of current needs.⁴⁵ Boorda supported the centrality of the Navy-Marine Corps team. But he did not want to be limited by the Marine Corps's doctrinal holdings or otherwise hemmed in by the perception that the Navy was now all about fighting small wars in the littoral. He sought to emphasize the broad capabilities of the world's only global navy in operating across the spectrum.⁴⁶

CNO Boorda often used the term "blue water," which he knew was sure to upset the Marines. The term was pejorative when used particularly by the Air Force and the Army to denote what they saw as an excessive preoccupation with high-end power projection and sea control "toys," given the lack of a naval threat. Boorda noted, "Even though we are concentrating our efforts on the capabilities required in the complex littoral environment, we retain those blue-water tools required of a global naval force—the tools necessary for maintaining a forward presence and achieving victory in a major regional conflict."⁴⁷ The new CNO noted, "Somalia changed things, changed things a lot," referring to the Black Hawk-down event in October 1993. "The things we are planning about Korea make us think differently," he noted.⁴⁸ He was referring to the crisis in the summer of 1994 that saw the United States on the brink of war with North Korea. In essence, the Clinton administration's foreign policy had adopted a

⁴⁴ See Admiral Jeremy M. Boorda, "Time for a '...Sea' Change," U.S. Naval Institute *Proceedings* 120, no. 8 (August 1994): 9–10.

⁴⁵ Nick Kotz, "Breaking Point," *The Washingtonian* (December 1996): 98.

⁴⁶ Boorda, "Time for a '...Sea' Change," 9.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*

⁴⁸ Otto Kreisher, "Navy's New Strategic Doctrine is on Deck," *San Diego Union-Tribune*, July 1, 1994.

Transitioners approach until Enlargement had failed, and then had shifted to a *Big Stick* outlook. The Navy needed to highlight its deterrent and crisis management role as well as its strike warfare and sea control capabilities, particularly in a conflict on the Korean peninsula.

General Mundy had a different problem. He supported forward presence. But he could neither forsake expeditionary maneuver warfare in the littoral, which was the Marine's Corps traditional operating area, nor deprecate the kind of small-scale interventions, embassy evacuations, and so on, for which the Marine Corps was uniquely qualified and was encountering at an increasing rate. Such operations provided the Marine Corps with a measure of empirical evidence that its services were indispensable, despite the air power-centric direction of U.S. strategy. But asserting the Marine Corps's unique qualities came at the expense of the Navy's arguments about the decisiveness of naval strike warfare. Mundy argued that littoral warfare was not just a Navy-Marine Corps problem, but also a joint one.⁴⁹ In his view, the naval services dominated the areas on either side of large conflict, where their speed, presence, and flexibility were uniquely suited to forestall crisis. Failing that, they bought time as the United States politicians and U.S. military leaders debated and the Army and Air Force slowly mobilized for war.

For OPNAV's Strategy and Concepts branch (formerly known as OP-603, now N513), Secretary Dalton's tasking was an opportunity to solve a problem it had been working on with officers from Resources, Warfare Requirements, and Assessments (N8). Whereas the Base Force sized the military to wage two simultaneous major regional conflicts, the Bottom-Up Review's was two *nearly* simultaneous ones. According to the Bottom-Up Review, the military's purpose was to secure victory in major regional conflicts, execute small-scale interventions, and deter attacks employing weapons of

⁴⁹ General Carl E. Mundy Jr., U.S. Marine Corps, "Thunder and Lightning: Joint Littoral Warfare," *Joint Force Quarterly* 4 (Spring 1994): 46.

mass destruction. Moreover, it was to maintain overseas presence to deter crises and provide stability.⁵⁰

Unlike the Navy and Marine Corps, the Air Force and the Army had not argued that their presence and crisis management requirements should result in larger force structures, which were sized only for regional conflict. As the authors of a RAND study noted,

Although Air Force commitments to contingency operations had already increased by the time of the BUR [Bottom-Up Review], the Air Force does not appear to have pressed the case that peacetime presence and contingency operations should also be considered in sizing the U.S. Air Force—an argument that the Navy had profitably used to justify a 12-carrier force.⁵¹

The Air Force and the Army sought to overturn the Navy's victory before it gelled into the budget. They pointed out that ...*From the Sea* had not emphasized presence. They argued that the concept of "presence" was narrow if not obsolete.⁵² The Army claimed that offshore naval forces offered little political leverage, unless there were Marines involved, who could seize territory, in which case paratroopers flown in from the United States would be more effective. For the Army, the ultimate deterrent was the threat of "boots on the ground." The Air Force asserted that the threat of a massive precision-guided strike from the United States was more effective than ground forces or U.S. warships in international waters. The Army's and the Air Force's understanding of presence and crisis management was more kinetic and less nuanced. Neither their experiences nor their capabilities lend themselves to applying force across the spectrum of conflict, which did not, however, stop them from staking out areas on either side of major conflict to bolster their force structures.

⁵⁰ Larson, Orletsky, Leuschner, *Defense Planning in a Decade of Change*, 46.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, xx.

⁵² See Philip Gold, "The Military Frets Over the Absence of 'Presence,'" *Washington Times*, October 25, 1994.

Even before Secretary Dalton asked for a new strategy then, OPNAV, particularly those in N8 who sought to use forward presence rather than major regional conflict as a basis for sizing the fleet, was looking for a high-profile way to buttress ...*From the Sea*'s weak rationale about presence.⁵³ Also, Rear Admiral Philip A. Dur, who had replaced Ted Baker as the head of the Strategy, Plans, and Policy Division (N51), had hoped to produce an enduring and far-reaching document that drove the direction of post-Cold War naval strategy, as did the head of his Strategy and Concepts branch (N513), Captain Joe Sestak.⁵⁴ Sestak, like Dur, had a PhD in Political Economy and Government from Harvard and was a highly ambitious officer from the surface warfare community. The desire to pen the next *Maritime Strategy*, and reap the career-enhancing laurels that came with it, remained strong in the strategy community throughout the 1990s even as its influence waned, which was not surprising as many had participated in its development.

F. FORWARD...FROM THE SEA

The new strategy, which was called *Forward...From the Sea*, was drafted in late 1994 by the Strategy and Concepts branch (N513). It was then sent up to Rear Admiral Dur and his counterpart in the Marine Corps, Tom Wilkerson, who had been promoted to major general. They worked closely in writing major portions of what ended up as a four-page document. *Forward...From the Sea* differed from ...*From the Sea* in several respects. It had a global perspective, not a regional, littoral, tactical, or expeditionary focus. Terms like “broad oceans,” “transoceanic,” and “highways of the sea,” conveyed a global perspective that had been missing in ...*From the Sea*. *Forward...From the Sea* noted, “The vital economic, political, and military interests of the United States are truly global in nature and scope.”⁵⁵ Yet, that is about as close as the document came to relating

⁵³ Captain Joseph F. Bouchard, U.S. Navy (Ret.), email message to John B. Hattendorf, July 17, 2006. (Bouchard relieved Sestak in early 1995 and served as the branch chief until 1997.)

⁵⁴ Captain Joseph F. Bouchard, U.S. Navy (Ret.), email message to Peter M. Swartz, April 8, 2005.

⁵⁵ “Forward... From the Sea,” Secretary of the Navy John H. Dalton, Chief of Naval Operations Admiral Jeremy M. Boorda, and Commandant of the Marine Corps General Carl E. Mundy Jr., U.S. Marine Corps, U.S. Naval Institute *Proceedings* 120, no. 12 (December 1994): 46.

naval capabilities to systemic goals such as those represented by the two pillars of Clinton's national security strategy—1) a strong U.S. economy and the growth of a more interdependent global economy; and 2) the enlargement of democracy and free-market values.

Forward...From the Sea did not address technologies associated with the emerging "Revolution in Military Affairs." This was an interesting if not glaring omission. Admiral Owens was still the vice chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, a position that now held more power over decisions about the Services' resource choices than any other uniformed officer. *Forward...From the Sea* also lacked ...*From the Sea's* strong language that naval forces could be decisive on their own. It was also more conciliatory about the need for jointness. "Decisive" was used in terms of a joint campaign and, at least for the Marines, as an enabling role.⁵⁶

If ...*From the Sea* focused on dominating the littoral, stand-alone strike capabilities, and expeditionary warfare (too much on the latter for the tastes of many Navy officers), then its update was about how "naval forces are particularly well-suited to the entire range of military operations" and are an "indispensable and exceptional instrument of U.S. foreign policy."⁵⁷ *Forward...From the Sea* also contained budgetary charts. One displayed a history of the Navy's and Marine Corps's shares of the Navy Department's budget since 1980. It showed that while the Navy's share started to plummet in 1986, the Marines' had remained steady through fiscal year 1998. In 1986, the Marine portion was one-eleventh of the Navy's. By fiscal year 1998, it was one-sixth. The other chart indicated that the Navy's support of littoral warfare would increase through 1999.⁵⁸ In other words, this was proof positive that the Marine Corps was not being short-changed in terms of the Navy Department's budget.

⁵⁶ Ibid., 48.

⁵⁷ Ibid., 47.

⁵⁸ Ibid., 49.

Finally, *Forward...From the Sea* elaborated on the presence mission. It pointed out that the Bottom-Up Review had “emphasized the importance of maintaining forward-deployed naval forces and recognized the impact of peacetime operational tempo on the size of Navy and Marine Corps force structure.”⁵⁹ *Forward...From the Sea* reiterated that “naval forces are the foundation of peacetime forward presence operations and overseas response to crisis.”⁶⁰ As a way of gaining support for the presence mission, it quoted the administration’s 1994 *National Security Strategy*:

Presence demonstrates our commitment to allies and friends, underwrites regional stability, gains U.S. familiarity with overseas operating environments, promotes combined training among the forces of friendly countries, and provides timely initial response capabilities.⁶¹

Presence, in other words, was key to maintaining a forward deployed fleet and to justifying the numbers of ships needed to fulfill the regional CINCs’ presence requirements as, in general, it takes three ships to keep one forward deployed.

Overall, *Forward...From the Sea* was more explanatory and measured than its more didactic and expository predecessor, *...From the Sea*. *Forward...From the Sea* explained how naval forces would support a *Transitioneers*’ agenda without embracing the approach unreservedly. Nor did it display the *Cold Worriers*’ tactical-technological enthusiasms. It fused the agendas of the secretary of the Navy, the CNO, and the Marine Corps commandant while concealing the seams more successfully than most of the Navy’s and Marine Corps’s consensual documents. The logic of its arguments flowed from peacetime to crisis deterrence to crisis management to seizing the initiative to large-scale conflict. In its structure and tone, it was perhaps more like the *Maritime Strategy* than any other of the Navy’s post-Cold War strategic statements.

⁵⁹ Ibid., 46.

⁶⁰ Ibid.

⁶¹ Ibid., 47.

Not surprisingly, *Forward...From the Sea* did not resonate with Congress, whose concerns had always focused on wartime requirements and, in their absence, on economizing. Moreover, the de-emphasis on “decisive” naval power and focus on cross-spectrum and “enabling” capabilities had inadvertently opened the Navy up for attacks from the Air Force and the Army.⁶² They derisively called *Forward...From the Sea* “Foyer...From the Sea,” arguing that the document merely confirmed that the naval services *really were* just crisis managers and doormen, as they had been in the 1990–91 Gulf War. They argued that because the Navy’s and Marine Corps’s forward forces were so small, they simply were not “combat credible.” Plus, the Air Force and the Army successfully had the Joint Staff widen the concept of “presence” to incorporate virtually any form of military activity outside of the continental United States, which implied that Army and Air Force contributions in this area were as important as those of the Navy and the Marine Corps. The Army’s and the Air Force’s arguments were bolstered by contending that the naval services’ claims about their “exceptional” and “indispensable” capabilities were parochial and contrary to the spirit of jointness, an argument that did resonate with the Joint Staff.

Forward...From the Sea enjoyed wide circulation in the defense establishment for about a year. Its arguments were used in the Navy and Marine Corps posture statements, congressional testimony, and speeches, and it had considerable influence on allied and foreign naval thinking.⁶³ However, those in N8 had never envisioned it to be much more than an instrument for short-term gain anyway, and in that sense it met its needs well. For the strategy folks, it was successful in the sense that it buttressed forward deployment and elevated presence as a central tenet. But it was not the *Maritime Strategy*, nor did it restore the prominence of the Strategy and Concepts branch (N513), which was reportedly not well regarded by Boorda.

⁶² Rest of paragraph based on Bouchard, emails, April 8, 2005 and July 17, 2006.

⁶³ Peter M. Swartz and Karen Duggan, “U.S. Navy Capstone Strategies and Concepts (1991–2000): Strategy, Policy, Concept, and Vision Documents,” PowerPoint in PDF (Alexandria, VA: Center for Naval Analyses, March 2012), 95, slides 189–190, <http://www.cna.org/research/2012/us-navy-capstone-strategies-concepts-1991-2000>.

G. CONCLUSION

President Clinton's Enlargement strategy was about the closest the United States came to a systemic approach in the 1990s. That is not saying much, however. As an intellectual framework to build consensus and organize American efforts, Enlargement was largely rhetorical.⁶⁴ It was meant to build domestic support for interventions, and fell short of considering how exactly military force would expand free-markets and democracies or otherwise realize American long-term goals. The fault, however, simply cannot be laid at the feet of Clinton's "thinkers," whose efforts to reorient thinking away from threats and toward greater goals was not without merit. Strategy is the bridge that connects political goals with military force (and vice versa).⁶⁵ Success nevertheless depends on the presence of real people able to cross the bridge. Neither Secretary Aspin nor General Powell was up to the challenge of determining how military force could contribute to the realization of systemic goals. They simply balked. They thought about how force would be used, and when and where, but not ultimately why.

So while Clinton's foreign policy focused on enlarging the number of free-market democracies and vindicating human rights, his defense policy remained preoccupied with finding efficiencies in warfighting through "revolutionary" technologies to defeat regional foes. In short, Enlargement and the Bottom-Up Review were utterly misaligned. While Clinton pursued a *Transitioners'* approach, the military, which viewed his administration with skepticism if not outright hostility, focused on the next Gulf War and spent its declining funds on building a futuristic *Cold Worrier's* force at the cost of current capabilities and resources. Botched interventions in turn deprived the Clinton administration of the initiative required to establish a lasting vision for the post-Cold War era.⁶⁶

⁶⁴ To be sure, President Clinton's efforts to enlarge NATO and pursue NATO's Partnership for Peace program did have significant consequences beyond rhetoric.

⁶⁵ Colin S. Gray, *Strategy and History: Essays on Theory and Practice* (London: Routledge, 2006), 77.

⁶⁶ Chollet and Goldgeier, *America between the Wars*, 84.

For its part, the Navy was not about to climb onto the bridge alone and offer a systemic grand strategy. The admirals that structured Navy strategy in the early 1990s were nuclear submariners. These engineers focused on advanced technology and believed in process—a psychological legacy, perhaps, of Admiral Hyman Rickover’s fixation on adhering to procedures and redesigning processes to avoid nuclear reactor accidents. Once established, the correct process would yield the correct answers. In the 1980s, the consensual process had been controlled by the strategists in OPNAV, the mechanism of which was a tightly held secret-level brief. In the 1990s, Kelso and Owens had ensured OPNAV’s resource managers now controlled the process. The structure of the new process ensured that the operational, programmatic, and manpower backgrounds of most admirals trumped the too few admirals with strategy backgrounds.

Motivated by the need to redress the Navy’s vulnerability in the wake of Goldwater-Nichols, Powell’s changes, and the Gulf War, the decisions of Navy leaders were shaped by the need to meet the joint operational needs of the regional CINCs whose perspectives were regional, not global. This focus allowed the Navy to fixate on solving the technical problems associated with catering to the CINCs and spared it from understanding how operational goals would lead to greater political ends, which was now the CINCs’ responsibility.

Nevertheless, the Navy’s non-kinetic missions were now attracting attention and encompassed in its official outlook for the first time since the end of the Cold War. The Bottom-Up Review had recognized the relationship between the Navy, foreign presence, and Clinton’s foreign policy goals. The Navy had successfully translated presence and crisis response requirements into force structure requirements, which raised the ire of the Air Force and the Army, which were jealous of the Navy’s ability to demonstrate its relevance across the spectrum of conflict by emphasizing the flexibility of naval forces. Measuring the effectiveness of presence outside of crisis response remained problematic, but even so, the post-Cold War world was not short of crises. Only when a balanced fleet was forward deployed could the possibilities of U.S. naval force be fully exploited. For the Navy, presence and crisis response necessarily went hand-in-hand.

Meanwhile, the Navy-Marine Corps partnership was wearing thin, strained by different needs and beliefs. They would go their separate ways after *Forward...From the Sea*, which was the last co-signed strategic document until 2001's Naval Power 21. The drive for a consensual Navy-Marine Corps view left the Navy vulnerable to attacks that naval power was not decisive in large conflicts and was more suited to serve as an enabling force. In contrast to the Navy, the Marine Corps's future looked comparatively brighter given its warfighting focus, a balanced force structure protected by law, and its indispensable niche capabilities in the kinds of small-scale interventions that now seemed to have no end. The Navy was not a niche service, but rather the opposite—a global one. It continued to struggle with its own understanding of what this meant, and to search for concepts and language to defend its interests in competition with the other services, and against countervailing elements of its own traditions.

With *...From the Sea*, *Force 2001*, and *Forward...From the Sea*, the Navy believed it had sufficiently solved the problem of how to refashion its *raison d'être* and reassert its relevance, now it only had to work out the details. Strategy was placed on the back burner as the Navy spent the rest of the 1990s focused on securing a new strike aircraft, keeping a low profile, and trimming its sails to account for the defense establishment's newest conceptual fads.

VII. 2020 VISION, 1995–96

A. THE CLINTON FOREIGN POLICY IN TRANSITION

The year and a half after the release of *Forward...From the Sea* was a period of transition for the Clinton White House. The president's goal was still the enlargement of free-market democracies. And he still believed that American power depended foremost on its economic strength. But the attempt to develop a single crystallized idea—containment's successor—as a means of aligning military, economic, and political effort was abandoned. In what might be considered a turning point in U.S. foreign policy, President Clinton eschewed a reductionist outlook and adapted a more flexible approach.¹ The post-Cold War era was proving too complex, U.S. interests were too hard to define, and Americans were too uninterested in foreign affairs to support an ideologically grounded policy. Each international issue would be addressed narrowly on its own merits. This was a complicated way of running foreign affairs, one that was prone to muddling pragmatically from one problem to another. But Clinton's emphasis on flexibility and adaptability and weighing Americans' moods perfectly matched his considerable political skills. Clinton was castigated for not having a cohesive approach.² But Clinton was not a visionary; he was a consummate politician who understood the fluid link between foreign policy and society in a manner more reminiscent of Franklin Roosevelt than any of his immediate predecessors.

A new defense team executed President Clinton's new approach to U.S. foreign policy. Secretary of Defense William J. Perry had replaced Les Aspin after the Somalia debacle in 1993, and was widely respected in the Pentagon. Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff General John Shalikashvili was another low-key member of the team. Unlike his predecessor, Colin Powell, Shalikashvili was not a permanent roadblock in the use of

¹ Hal Brands, *From Berlin to Baghdad: America's Search for Purpose in the Post-Cold War World* (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 2008), 193–197.

² *Ibid.*, 195.

force, and his knowledge of European and NATO politics helped parlay Clinton's most intractable foreign policy problem into his first major foreign policy success. This problem was Bosnia, which had bedeviled the George H. W. Bush and Clinton administrations throughout the first half of the decade, and was the site of the worst violence in Europe since the Second World War. The fall of Srebrenica, a small mountain village in Bosnia and Herzegovina, in July 1995 and the subsequent massacre of seven thousand Bosnian Muslims at the hands of invading Serbs, galvanized the Clinton administration into action, despite a lack of interest among Americans.³ In late August 1995, the United States played a preponderant role in a precision air campaign by NATO forces lasting three weeks, which primarily targeted Serbian command and control facilities, thus rendering Serbian forces in the field vulnerable to counter-attacks by indigenous opponents.

An exercise in coercion based upon economy of force, Operation Deliberate Force, as it was known, had few equals. It saw strikes from U.S. carriers and surface combatants launching Tomahawk cruise missiles, whose unnerving accuracy proved particularly intimidating.⁴ The air campaign brought about the successful Dayton Agreement, and with it an end to the war in Bosnia and Herzegovina. As senior U.S. State Department official Richard Holbrooke noted, "One of the great things that people should have learned from this is that there are times when air power—not backed by ground troops—can make a difference."⁵ Precision-strike warfare had proved, if anything, even more decisive than in Desert Storm.

³ Carl P. Leubsdorf, "Why Bosnian Quagmire Bedevils Clinton," *Dallas Morning News*, August 3, 1995.

⁴ As David Halberstam noted, "Nothing had shaken [Serbian leader Slobodan] Milosevic quite like the use of the Tomahawk missile." One day before the start of the Dayton talks, as Halberstam noted, Americans gave Milosevic and other Serbs a tour of the Air Force museum in Dayton, Ohio and not-so-subtly showed them a model of a Tomahawk. David Halberstam, *War in a Time of Peace: Bush, Clinton, and the Generals* (New York: Scribner, 2001), 350 and 354, respectively.

⁵ Richard P. Hallion, "Precision Guided Munitions and the New Era of Warfare," Working Paper no. 53 (Fairbairn, Australia: Air Power Studies Centre, 1995), <http://www.fas.org/man/DoD-101/sys/smart/docs/paper53.htm>.

The success in Bosnia restored America's international prestige and solidified President Clinton's fluid foreign policy approach. As John Harris noted, Clinton "emerged from the fall of 1995 as a vastly more self-confident and commanding leader."⁶ Clinton followed up his success in September 1996 when the United States launched a massive cruise missile attack against Iraq that stopped an Iraqi offensive in the Kurdish regions of northern Iraq—another demonstration of the link between coercive diplomacy and precision strike weapons, whose capacity to limit risk (and casualties generally) cast the use of force in a new and more promising light.

B. JOINTNESS AND THE REVOLUTION IN MILITARY AFFAIRS

In the Pentagon, General Shalikashvili and his vice chairman, Admiral Bill Owens, were busy sorting out what Goldwater-Nichols, the bottom-up assessments, and the U.S. victories in the Persian Gulf and the Balkans meant. Owens was developing a new vision of the future U.S. military and new consensual procedures to realize it.⁷ Foremost, the events of the early- and mid-1990s meant a renewed emphasis on realizing the benefits of "jointness." As one Navy officer noted,

It has become politically incorrect to question jointness as *the* preeminent way for the military to do business as a whole. Jointness has also become a panacea for Congress and others in reprioritizing declining defense budgets. As a result, civilian officials and military leaders are accelerating this already fast-moving concept.⁸

Practical definitions of jointness now began to crystallize. It had always meant fighting as a "joint team." After the 1990–91 Gulf War and Bosnia, however, it moved from coordination to integration. Owens championed this approach, which sought operational synergy through the careful synchronization of unique service capabilities.

⁶ John F. Harris, *The Survivor: Bill Clinton in the White House* (New York: Random House, 2005), 221.

⁷ See Bradley Graham, "Battle Plans for a New Century," *Washington Post*, February 21, 1995.

⁸ Commander Michael C. Vitale, "Jointness By Design, Not Accident," *Joint Force Quarterly* 9 (Autumn 1995): 25. Emphasis in the original.

One of the primary means to determine what “joint” meant was through the development of joint doctrine. As noted in 1998 by Shalikashvili’s successor, Army General Henry H. “Hugh” Shelton,

Our starting point is joint doctrine. Because doctrine undergirds everything we do, it is the logical beginning for our efforts to translate our vision of joint war fighting into reality. Joint doctrine is indispensable because it provides the overarching framework for the conduct of joint operations.⁹

The effort to develop joint doctrine became a major project throughout the Department of Defense.

Goldwater-Nichols had made the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff responsible for the development of joint doctrine, and for developing policies to guide joint training and education. It empowered the chairman to ensure that the requirements and campaign plans of the CINCs were properly resourced, and made him responsible for strategic planning. The Joint Staff integrated and prioritized requirements, and submitted alternative recommendations to the secretary of defense in the event the Services’ proposals did not conform to the chairman’s plans and the CINCs’ priorities, a prerogative that joint doctrine reinforced. As Douglas Lovelace Jr. and Thomas-Durell Young noted, “The utility of joint doctrine extends beyond the employment of joint forces. It affects virtually all of the Chairman’s strategic planning activities.”¹⁰

Another means to realize jointness and form a consensual vision was the influential Joint Resource Oversight Council. This was a forum created by Owens to bring the Services’ vice chiefs of staff (the second highest uniformed leader in each service, which for the Navy was the vice CNO) together to examine military requirements holistically, air out differences in a candid manner, and arrive at a consensus—a corporate board where the vice chiefs could be educated and coaxed to put

⁹ General Henry H. Shelton, U.S. Army, “Operationalizing Joint Vision 2010,” *Airpower Journal* 12, no. 3 (Fall 1998), <http://www.airpower.maxwell.af.mil/airchronicles/apj/apj98/fal98/shelton.htm>.

¹⁰ Douglas C. Lovelace Jr. and Thomas-Durell Young, *Strategic Plans, Joint Doctrine, and Antipodean Insights* (Carlisle Barracks, PA, U.S. Army War College, Strategic Studies Institute, 1995), 5.

aside parochial interests and endorse programs and concepts to support the CINCs' requirements. Their decisions were in effect a negotiated compromise of service interests. The council institutionalized the chairman's authority over planning and procurement, and became one of his primary vehicles for advancing budget and program recommendations. Much as he had in OPNAV, Owens had reconfigured the military's resource decision-making process, overturned normal staffing procedures, and now largely controlled it on behalf of the CINCs. Again he was applying the principle that the process of building consensus was as important as the product that emerged.

As intended, the process improved mutual understanding and trust among the Services' vice chiefs.¹¹ Much of the discussion during the council's meetings, which averaged an extraordinary ten hours a week, revolved around how to leverage technology in three areas: 1) precision force; 2) intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance; and 3) command, control, communications and intelligence networking.¹² Such discussions reflected the general direction of the draft "joint vision" that was being developed. As Shalikashvili noted in written remarks to congressional committees, "What we set in motion is an entirely new era in warfare....What is changing is *the very nature* of modern battle."¹³

The new vision was going to be about how to realize a Revolution in Military Affairs, which Jeffrey Cooper has defined as "a discontinuous increase in military capability and effectiveness."¹⁴ It was about embracing Information Age technologies and inserting them at the heart of joint doctrine, so as to allow a smaller but higher-tech military to secure swift and decisive victory on the battlefield with comparatively few

¹¹ Bradley Graham, "Military Services to Propose More Standardized Munitions," *Washington Post*, March 22, 1995.

¹² James Blaker, "How the Pentagon Designs Its 21st Century Strategy," *Christian Science Monitor*, January 30, 1996 and Chris Black, "Joint Operations Called Trend for Armed Services Savings, Improved Readiness Drive Move," *Boston Globe*, December 31, 1994.

¹³ Graham, "Battle Plans for a New Century." Emphasis added.

¹⁴ Jeffrey R. Cooper, *Another View of the Revolution in Military Affairs* (Carlisle Barracks, PA: U.S. Army War College, Strategic Studies Institute, 1994), 13.

casualties. As the post-Cold War's rendition of the traditional U.S. bent toward reductionist theories in warfare, "jointness" and the Revolution in Military Affairs in information and precision-guided technologies had now fully emerged as *the* Big Ideas that drove defense thinking in the 1990s. Inevitably, their advancement soon became an end in itself.

C. THE RISE AND FALL OF NAVAL DOCTRINE

The Navy's problem in the first half of the 1990s had been how to reassert its relevance and restructure the fleet in light of a new mix of international threats, given a shrinking budget, the need to maintain a partnership with the Marine Corps, and an emphasis on jointness and technology. From late 1994 through 1997, those elements in the Navy responsible for developing strategy occupied themselves with the problem of how to tie these considerations together. One means to integrate the Navy and the Marine Corps and assert naval relevance in joint decision-making was doctrine. CNO Kelso established the Naval Doctrine Command in March 1993, fulfilling a commitment made in ...*From the Sea*, which declared that the organization's goal was to ensure the "smooth integration of Naval Forces into joint operations at any level, close the gap between the air-land battle and amphibious warfare, and translate 'operational maneuver from the sea' into naval doctrine. Above all, it will *build doctrine for expeditionary warfare*."¹⁵

Written doctrine had not previously loomed large in the Navy. Historically, it eschewed authoritative doctrine believing that it restricted the ability of its officers to react in combat.¹⁶ There had of course been ad hoc exceptions to this tendency. During the Cold War, the Navy had developed tactical publications and procedures to work with other NATO navies, for example. Nevertheless, success at sea was not thought to depend

¹⁵ Secretary of the Navy Sean O'Keefe, Chief of Naval Operations Admiral Frank B. Kelso II, and Commandant of the Marine Corps General Alfred M. Gray Jr., U.S. Marine Corps, "...From the Sea: Preparing the Naval Service for the 21st Century," U.S. Naval Institute *Proceedings* 118, no. 11 (November 1992): 96. Emphasis in the original.

¹⁶ See Captain Wayne P. Hughes Jr. (Ret.), *Fleet Tactics and Coastal Combat* (1986; Annapolis, MD: U.S. Naval Institute, 2000), 29–33.

on adherence to doctrinal norms, but on the problem-solving ability of the Navy's officers, its decentralized command structures, and its willingness to delegate authority. "Doctrine" for the Navy was like the British constitution—an unwritten set of convictions, principles, and understandings that were acquired experientially and passed down more or less orally, all of which were thoroughly understood by its practitioners.

To soldiers and Marines, however, written doctrine is fundamental. It fuses their operational planning, organizational structure, training, tactics, and resource decisions. It coordinates artillery, infantry, armor, and air units, creating the reality of "combined arms." For ground forces in particular, written doctrine remains the essential starting point for all forms of functional integration. This was how Shalikashvili understood doctrine, and he wished that understanding to become general.¹⁷ In July 1994, he issued a memorandum that changed the statement found in all joint publications, declaring that "This publication is authoritative but not directive" to the more emphatic "The guidance in this publication is authoritative; as such, commanders will apply this doctrine...except when exceptional circumstances dictate otherwise."¹⁸ As Peter Swartz noted, Navy officers bristled at the move.¹⁹ To them, it was another indication that "jointness" was being defined as the Army's way of thinking. Nevertheless, doctrine was becoming the lingua franca of the joint world, the common language used by the Services to understand each other. Service doctrine was the starting point from which joint doctrine would be developed. But, as Rebecca Grant noted, "Joint doctrine perpetuates a 'land-centric' focus because it is largely based on Army concepts."²⁰ Because they were "vindicated" in

¹⁷ Lovelace and Young, *Strategic Plans*, 3.

¹⁸ Memorandum (MCM-90-94), Director of the Joint Staff, Office of the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of the Staff, Pentagon, Washington, DC, July 28, 1994, quoted in Lovelace and Young, *Strategic Plans*, 3.

¹⁹ Peter M. Swartz with Karin Duggan, "U.S. Navy Capstone Strategies and Concepts (1991-2000): Strategy, Policy, Concept, and Vision Documents," PowerPoint brief in PDF (Alexandria, VA: Center for Naval Analyses, March 2012), 73, slide 146, <http://www.cna.org/research/2012/us-navy-capstone-strategies-concepts-1991-2000>.

²⁰ Rebecca Grant, "Closing the Doctrine Gap." *Air Force Magazine* 80, no. 1 (January 1997): 48.

the 1990–91 Gulf War, the Army’s *AirLand Battle* and the Air Force’s strategic bombing doctrines were forming the basis of joint doctrine.

CNO Kelso assigned Rear Admiral Fred “Bad” Lewis and 50 officers and civilians to standup the Naval Doctrine Command in Norfolk, Virginia. The positioning of the command in Norfolk was instrumental. Its location allowed the staff to keep in close contact with the fleet (Naval Base Norfolk/Naval Air Station Norfolk was the Navy’s largest base) and with its service and joint counterparts, all of which were located nearby and well away from the Pentagon, which undoubtedly was an attempt to keep doctrine from being overly colored by the Services’ programmatic agendas.²¹ Most of the new command’s officers came recently from fleet tours. Almost none of the officers tasked to develop doctrine had much experience writing strategy, operational concepts, or doctrine (few Navy officers did) or had attended the Naval War College.

The pressure for the newly established command to produce the first of six documents, entitled *Naval Warfare: Naval Doctrine Publication 1* (NDP-1), was immense. The staff spent months first defining what doctrine meant to the Navy. In contrast to their counterparts in the other services, the three-officer writing team was starting literally with a blank sheet of paper. (NDP-1 was written in-house—no contractors were employed.) The writing team’s efforts were constrained by the well-meaning philosophy of the command, which intentionally did not seek to outsource development of the content. This was simply to maintain control of style, flow, and proportional emphasis of many subject areas. As noted by Commander Rob Zalaskus, the primary writer, “The command’s general feeling was that doctrine was an unfamiliar

²¹ Paragraph based on Captain Robert M. “Rob” Zalaskus, U.S. Navy (Ret.), email messages to John Hattendorf and Peter M. Swartz, August 10, 2006 and to the author, May 6 and 7, 2013. (Zalaskus was the primary writer for three of the five naval doctrine publications developed by the Naval Doctrine Command.)

category of thinking and we could be inundated with programmatic spin losing the flavor of enduring principles.”²²

After numerous review boards with active and retired admirals and generals, NDP-1 was released in March 1994, a month before Admiral Frank Kelso retired as CNO and nine months before *Forward...From the Sea* was released. NDP-1 was a seventy-page booklet filled with historical vignettes that amplified themes from ...*From the Sea*, fused the two services’ doctrinal approaches, and explained the principles of war from a naval perspective. Included in this explanation was the difference between attritional warfare—which was about destroying the enemy’s forces—and maneuver warfare—which was conceived as the sort of artful and indirect approach to combat necessitated when a smaller force needed to use speed and surprise to attack the larger forces of an opponent or its centers of gravity. In the 1970s, both the Marine Corps and the Army had embraced maneuver warfare. NDP-1 stated that naval forces prefer maneuver warfare to attritional.²³ The command’s deputy commander, Colonel Marvin Floom, was an expert in Marine Corps doctrine, and—to gain the conceptual high ground and prevent the Navy from using NDP-1 for programmatic purposes—helped the Navy representatives to accept the idea of maneuver warfare before anyone at the Naval Doctrine Command really understood what maneuver warfare was.²⁴ While naval warfare involves maneuvering on, under, and above the sea, “naval battle,” as Captain Wayne Hughes noted, “is attrition centered. Victory by maneuver warfare may work on land but it does not at sea.”²⁵

²² Ibid. After NDP-1 was completed, NDP-4 *Naval Logistics* was the first to be outsourced to contractors, but the reaction by the flag review board to the product was so negative that the draft was turned over to Zalaskus who rewrote the publication with an officer from the Supply Corps. Zalaskus, emails to the author.

²³ *Naval Warfare*: Naval Doctrine Publication 1 (Washington, DC: Department of the Navy, March 28, 1994), 33.

²⁴ James J. Tritten, email message to Peter M. Swartz, April 11, 2005.

²⁵ Hughes, *Fleet Tactics and Coastal Combat*, 310.

In NDP-1, doctrine was defined as the bridge between strategy and the tactics, techniques, and procedures of naval operations.²⁶ It was authoritative, signed by both Kelso and then Commandant of the Marine Corps General Carl Mundy, and was intended to be the agreed-upon enduring principles representing the two services' approach to warfighting. The unspoken agreement in Naval Doctrine Command was that NDP-1 was to be a basic, uncontroversial document. More fundamental differences between the Navy and Marine Corps would be resolved in NDP-3 *Naval Operations*.²⁷

Overall, NDP-1 received generally supportive reviews, mainly because the Navy demonstrated it could write doctrine.²⁸ NDP-1 did what it had to do: set the stage for the supporting documents NDP-2 through NDP-6 and sit cleanly on the shelf next to Joint Publication 1 with its counterpart publications from Army, Air Force, and even the Marine Corps.²⁹ (The NDPs were purposively sized to match that of the joint doctrine publications.³⁰)

Notably, it received, at best, modest endorsement from the Naval War College, mainly because it was drafted without its formal participation. As Zalaskus noted, the decision to draft NDP-1 in house contributed to its tepid reception by the war college, which was home to scholars who were experts in Navy doctrine and its history.³¹ The war college had been brought in late in the process, perhaps too late for Zalaskus, who noted that the command's perspective worked to prevent engaging academia earlier and to a greater degree.³² (The war college remained on the sidelines through the

²⁶ *Naval Warfare*: Naval Doctrine Publication 1, 51.

²⁷ James J. Tritten, email message to Peter M. Swartz, May 21, 2005.

²⁸ For reviews of NDP-1, see Admiral David E. Jeremiah, U.S. Navy (Ret.); Colonel Peter F. Herrly, U.S. Army; Colonel John A. Warden III, U.S. Air Force; and Scott C. Truver in "Book Reviews: Review of Naval Doctrine Publication 1: Naval Warfare," U.S. Naval Institute *Proceedings* 120, no. 12 (December 1994): 82–85 as well as Swartz, "U.S. Navy Capstone Strategies and Concepts (1991–2000)," 72–74, slides 143–148.

²⁹ Zalaskus, emails.

³⁰ Ibid.

³¹ Ibid.

³² Ibid.

development of the other NDPs.³³) As expected, its impact on fleet day-to-day operations was minimal as it captured at a high level what the fleet was already doing. NDP-1 was surprisingly popular among the other services and their war colleges as well as among other navies, and remains so.³⁴ To them, NDP-1 had the Navy's imprimatur. But, to the fleet it was neither significant nor important.

The crown jewel of the Navy's doctrinal efforts was supposed to be NDP-3 *Naval Operations*, but early drafts became mired in a host of differences between Naval Doctrine Command and the Marine Corps Combat Development Command (which is in Quantico, Virginia), where the Marine Corps's doctrine is developed. One difference involved the command structure for the Naval Expeditionary Force, the basic unit of littoral warfare whose central elements were a carrier battle group (commanded by an admiral) and a Marine Air-Ground Task Force embarked on amphibious ships (commanded by a Marine general).³⁵ Which of these two would have precedence in given circumstances proved, understandably enough, to be a difficult problem.³⁶ Another was the difference between a "coordinated" versus an "integrated" view of jointness. The Naval Doctrine Command, backed by OPNAV, hewed to the former, while the Marines, broadly speaking, favored the latter. There was also a general reluctance on the part of the Marine Corps to diminish the highly regarded authority of its own doctrine command, compounded by a parallel reluctance on the part of the Navy to embrace a dominant doctrinal approach tied to warfare on land.³⁷ As CNO Boorda noted when NDP-3 was being developed,

³³ Ibid.

³⁴ Swartz, "U.S. Navy Capstone Strategies and Concepts (1991–2000)," 72, slide 143.

³⁵ At issue was the question of the command relationship between the commander, amphibious task force and the commander, landing force. The issue has been at the heart of the some of the bitterest disagreements between the Navy and Marine Corps since Rear Admiral Richmond Kelly Turner was given command of the amphibious task force for the landing on Guadalcanal in 1942. Zalaskus, emails to the author.

³⁶ See Captain Sam J. Tangredi, U.S. Navy "Who's Afraid of the NETF [Naval Expeditionary Task Force]?" U.S. Naval Institute *Proceedings* 125, no. 11 (November 1999): 45.

³⁷ Zalaskus, emails.

Some have argued that we only need capabilities for one discrete mission or another. Operational maneuver from the sea is an example. While I firmly support this [Marine Corps] concept and our current budget decisions reflect that position, it is only one of several warfighting capabilities naval forces must possess.³⁸

Boorda was stating what many in the Navy had been thinking in the mid-1990s, namely that ...*From the Sea* was too “green” and not “blue” enough. In other words, the Navy had allowed the Marine Corps to shape a vision that was too oriented around the mission of amphibious assault and warfare in the littoral (i.e., “green water”—although “green” also meant the Marine Corps, owing the color of its uniforms), which, as Boorda noted, was, from a Navy perspective, a specialized mission and only one of a number of missions that the Navy was responsible for, including missions that did not need the Marine Corps.

From 1995 to 1997, NDP-3 would go through almost forty iterations, and each time they were rejected, mostly by the Marine Corps Combat Development Command’s commanding general, Lieutenant General Paul K. Van Riper, a sharp-witted and sharp-tongued critic of the reductionist thinking upon which the Revolution in Military Affairs was based. Van Riper undoubtedly saw the Navy’s positions in NDP-3 as arguments for particular weapons systems programs. In the end, NDP-3 was never published, which undermined the other five NDPs, the Naval Doctrine Command’s stature, and the expectation that the Navy could develop doctrine to explain its warfighting approach.³⁹ The failure of this effort to articulate naval doctrine sent Marine and Navy leaders searching for other ways to realize ...*From the Sea* and their strategic partnership.

³⁸ Admiral Jeremy M. Boorda, “Time for a ‘...Sea’ Change,” U.S. Naval Institute *Proceedings* 120, no. 8 (August 1994): 9–10.

³⁹ These were NDP-1 *Naval Warfare*, NDP-2 *Naval Intelligence*, NDP-4 *Naval Logistics*, NDP-5 *Naval Planning*, and NDP-6 *Naval Command and Control*.

D. THE NAVAL OPERATIONAL CONCEPT

In the summer of 1995, the new commandant of the Marine Corps, General Charles C. Krulak (1995–99), was pushing Admiral Boorda to develop yet another Navy-Marine Corps document.⁴⁰ Krulak had been the head of the Marine Corps Combat Development Command between the release of *...From the Sea* in 1992 and *Forward...From the Sea* in late 1994 and was frustrated by the lack of doctrinal progress.⁴¹ Krulak was looking for an overarching conceptual framework, one that was not tied to resources, as was OPNAV's natural tendency, and preferably one that could get the Navy on board with the Marines' principal operational concept, which was called *Operational Maneuver from the Sea*. This effort was not intended to produce another strategic capstone document like *...From the Sea* or *Forward...From the Sea*. Secretary of the Navy John Dalton and Boorda had already signed the latter and saw no need for another such document.⁴² Instead, it was to be a naval "operational concept," which would fuse the inchoate ideas in *...From the Sea* with the more concrete ones in *Operational Maneuver from the Sea*.⁴³ To the Marine Corps, an "operational concept" was an instrument used by the Marines to flesh out and organize inchoate, but promising ideas. Generally speaking, the Navy lacked an institutional equivalent.

The head of OPNAV's Strategy and Concepts branch (N513), Commander Joseph F. "Joe" Bouchard, was already working on an operational concept of sorts.⁴⁴ He and several other surface officers in OPNAV in N3/N5 thought the post-Cold War era would generate strong demand for the Marine Corps's broad capabilities. Like Bouchard, whose PhD from Stanford University was in Political Science (with an emphasis in International Relations and Strategic Studies), they believed that Navy doctrine, which they saw as

⁴⁰ Captain Joseph F. Bouchard, U.S. Navy (Ret.), email message to Peter M. Swartz, April 8, 2005.

⁴¹ Captain Joseph F. Bouchard, U.S. Navy (Ret.), email message to Peter M. Swartz, June 27, 2005.

⁴² Bouchard, email, April 8, 2005.

⁴³ Ibid. General Krulak and the Marine Corps Combat Development Command saw *Forward...From the Sea* as a movement away from expeditionary warfare and largely ignored it.

⁴⁴ Paragraph based on Bouchard, email, April 8, 2005.

little more than explanations of how to employ weapons systems, was in no shape to influence joint doctrine or serve as a basis for Navy-Marine Corps integration. They saw the central tenets of the Marines' maneuver warfare doctrine as compatible with classic Navy thinking, given its emphasis on initiative and delegation of authority. To redress the Navy's doctrinal deficiencies and otherwise jumpstart the stalled process, they sought a Navy-Marine Corps document that fused Marine doctrine with Navy thinking and embedded Navy doctrine in the context of emerging joint doctrine. In essence, they saw a "naval operational concept" as a new, integrative instrument that had not previously been required, an instrument by which the Navy could emerge as the leader in innovating and expanding joint doctrine.

Bouchard briefed OPNAV's three-star admirals, who initially did not endorse sending the proposal to Boorda.⁴⁵ Sitting in the back row, however, was the head of OPNAV's N85 Expeditionary Warfare directorate, Major General James L. Jones (commandant of the Marine Corps, 1999–2003), who convinced them otherwise. Krulak, ever the driving force in Marine Corps doctrinal innovation, secured Boorda's promise to proceed with the project, which was launched in October 1995 and co-chaired by Bouchard.⁴⁶

"The Naval Operational Concept" was to be a broadly focused document that bridged the strategic concepts found in ...*From the Sea* and *Forward...From the Sea* with the "tactics, techniques and procedures" of the Navy's and the Marine Corps's doctrinal publications.⁴⁷ It was to cover the spectrum of conflict and the continuum of response from presence to crisis response to warfighting, and, as the project concept noted, "serve

⁴⁵ Paragraph based on Bouchard, email, April 8, 2005.

⁴⁶ The sixteen-person group consisted of representatives from Strategy and Concepts (N513), Navy's Resources, Warfare Requirements, and Assessments (N8), Naval Doctrine Command, Headquarters Marine Corps, and Marine Corps Combat Development Command. Their first draft was due in January 1996 with the final version being ready for signature by the CNO and commandant of the Marine Corps in July 1996. "Naval Operational Concept Project: Final Report Draft," unpublished, prepared by the U.S. Navy, U.S. Marine Corps and Systems Research and Applications (SRA) Corporation, Arlington, VA, January 19, 1996, 1–5.

⁴⁷ Ibid., 1–3.

as a catalyst for the development of doctrine, operational organizations, training and education, equipment and the supporting establishment. It will thus drive subsequent mission area assessments and the identification of capabilities.”⁴⁸

The Naval Operational Concept was an ambitious project that was immediately beset with obstacles. For one, the Marine Corps had three operational concepts—*Operational Maneuver from the Sea*, another for employing its non-amphibious land-based air wings and brigades, and a third for its Maritime Prepositioning Force, which was a group of specially designed ships stationed world-wide that contained tanks, ammunition, and stores for instant deployment. The group had initially focused on *Operational Maneuver from the Sea*, but was told by Headquarters Marine Corps, particularly its N8 equivalent (N8 being the Navy’s Resources, Warfare Requirements, and Assessments directorate), that it needed to encompass all three to justify a larger force structure for the Marine Corps.

For its part, the Naval Doctrine Command saw the project as a move by OPNAV to usurp its authority. The project was encroaching on its turf, but only because NDP-3 had become hopelessly mired in disagreement. As usual, those in N8 viewed the project as a ploy by the Marine Corps to lay claim to a greater share of the Navy Department’s shrinking budget, which was not surprising as the leaders of N8—the dominant element in OPNAV, and who viewed the Marine Corps as an enemy—saw all Navy strategic statements as inherently related to resource issues. These leaders wanted the group to encompass only amphibious warfare and *Operational Maneuver from the Sea*, particularly since N8 was already struggling to fund the new F/A-18 E/F “Super Hornet” long-range attack and fighter jet, the new *Virginia*-class attack submarine, and the operations in the Persian Gulf, Bosnia, and North Korea.

⁴⁸ Ibid., 1–4.

In general, OPNAV's Air Warfare Division (N88) and naval aviation also opposed the project.⁴⁹ They were pushing the Navy to adapt a carrier-strike warfare centered interpretation of ...*From the Sea* and *Forward...From the Sea*, an interpretation that was more in line with the new direction of foreign and defense policy than large-scale interventions in the littoral, and, moreover, also supported the F/A-18 E/F Super Hornet as the Navy's top budget priority. In fact, Bouchard, whose dissertation examined the Navy's crisis responses in the Cold War, was, in essence, arguing for small, fast, and expendable ships designed for littoral operations. Not surprisingly, Bouchard became none too popular with those in N8 or the Naval Doctrine Command, among an impressively growing list. His career took a large hit when Krulak, in a lengthy email to generals and admirals that presented his views on doctrine, praised Bouchard as the "Billy Mitchell of the Navy," a reference to the American air power advocate of the 1920s who, as a general in the Army's air arm, was court-martialed for accusing Army and Navy leaders of treason for ignoring the virtues of air power. Not surprisingly, the project foundered and by the spring of 1996 had stalled.

E. "2020 VISION"

Another controversial project underway was a draft white paper entitled "2020 Vision." It was being developed in the CNO's Executive Panel (N00K) by Captain Ed Smith, a participant in Phases I and II of the Naval Force Capabilities Planning Effort. Smith had been Boorda's intelligence officer when the admiral had command of a carrier battle group and thus had established a working relationship with the admiral. Written by Smith, the white paper was to be the first of two documents that established the Navy's priorities for strategy, doctrine, and future programs.⁵⁰ In congressional testimony, Boorda noted that he would sign out "2020 Vision" in the spring of 1996 and the companion "Navy Long Range Planning Objectives" later that summer. He stated that

⁴⁹ Paragraph based on Bouchard, email, April 8, 2005.

⁵⁰ Paragraph based on Chief of Naval Operations Admiral Jeremy M. Boorda, testimony to the U.S. Senate, Committee on Armed Services, *Department of Defense Authorization for Appropriations for FY97*, 104th Congress, 2nd Session, March 12, 1996, 313.

both documents would be reviewed and updated every two years as part of an iterative process to ensure the Navy was adapting to changes in defense policy, technology, and operational concepts.

“2020 Vision” was an argument on what the Navy should look like in the year 2020, and reflected the strong views of the admirals that shaped ...*From the Sea*. These admirals held that naval power projection was decisive by virtue of its mobility, flexibility, and revolutionary precision-strike and information technologies. ...*From the Sea* had fused their preference for a high-tech fleet with the Marines’ expeditionary style of maneuver warfare. From their perspective, ...*From the Sea* was about standoff precision strike warfare as a freestanding strategic expedient as much as it was about supporting naval forces ashore. “2020 Vision” expanded upon that idea. It was more regional than littoral, more joint than naval. It emphasized the decisiveness of *Navy* strike warfare and argued that a massed engagement of sea-launched precision munitions, supported by advanced surveillance and communication technologies that identified political and military centers of gravity, could take down an enemy’s political or military infrastructure in a matter of hours.

Although not specifically mentioned in the seventeen-page draft, the centerpiece of “2020 Vision” was the arsenal ship.⁵¹ This was essentially an 825-foot floating missile battery that contained 500 vertical tubes designed to carry thousands of missiles. It could be filled with fifteen types of missiles, many of which could be controlled remotely by any of the Services for use against targets on land, at sea, and in the air, including theater ballistic missiles. The arsenal ship was designed to be stationed overseas near hot spots for long periods, and could be moved to signal U.S. resolve. It would have a double hull for protection against torpedoes, mines, and cruise missiles, and would ride low in the water to lessen the chances of being detected by radar and hit by sea-skimming missiles. One or two of these ships could slow an enemy’s invasion force or other movements until

⁵¹ See John Mintz, “New Ship Could Be Next Wave in Warfare,” *Washington Post*, June 23, 1996.

other U.S. forces arrived. Boorda called it the “modern equivalent to the battleship,” and said that it was among the Navy’s highest priority programs.⁵²

Much of the rationale behind the ship involved cost and risk management. The 1,700 crewmen on the recently decommissioned USS *Missouri* cost \$67 million annually in pay and benefits, for example. The thirty-odd sailors on an arsenal ship would cost \$1.4 million annually, while placing far fewer lives at risk in the process.⁵³ An arsenal ship would cost \$750 million to design and construct, compared to a carrier’s \$4.5 billion, and would be far less expensive to operate and maintain.⁵⁴ As the draft noted, “Replacing a whole platform every time a weapon system becomes obsolete is impractical and unaffordable.”⁵⁵ Six arsenal ships were planned. They were to be stationed near Korea, in the Mediterranean, and in the Persian Gulf.⁵⁶

Two arsenal ships supplemented by a carrier and a few surface combatants armed with cruise missiles could deliver more firepower and with less warning than U.S.-based Air Force bombers, it was argued, and would therefore be a greater deterrent. Ships could maneuver away from reprisal attacks as long as the Navy held local sea and air control, which of course called for a balanced fleet. In “2020 Vision,” Smith was arguing that a fleet built to deliver decisive effects in a regional conflict would increase the effectiveness of presence and crisis response missions as well. Credibility and deterrence rested foremost on the fleet’s kinetic capabilities. In short, “2020 Vision” defended a high-tech fleet, supported the Navy’s belief in forward deployment and operational “balance,” and asserted the decisiveness of naval power projection. In addition, by

⁵² David Lerman, “Bush Calls for Revival of Arsenal Ship,” (*Newport News, VA*) *Daily Press*, April 9, 2000. The quote is from Eric Schmitt, “Aircraft Carrier May Give Way To Missile Ship,” *New York Times*, September 3, 1995.

⁵³ Mintz, “New Ship Could Be Next Wave in Warfare.”

⁵⁴ Dale Eisman, “Arsenal Ship Wouldn’t Replace Carriers,” *The (Norfolk, VA) Virginian-Pilot*, September 11, 1995.

⁵⁵ Dale Eisman, “Draft Report Makes a Case Against Further Navy Cuts,” *The (Norfolk, VA) Virginian-Pilot*, March 6, 1996.

⁵⁶ Mintz, “New Ship Could Be Next Wave in Warfare.”

providing a mobile sea-based defense against theater ballistic missiles, task forces incorporating arsenal ships might gain the U.S. government more cooperation from potential coalition partners.⁵⁷

The arsenal ship had many supporters. “This is the first totally new warship concept by the Navy since the 1950s, when it developed the fleet ballistic missile submarine,” said Norman Polmar. “It’s an opportunity for Navy admirals to show they’re not fighting the [World War II] battle of Midway, but taking advantage of the newest technologies.”⁵⁸ But the ship had as many detractors. Critics called it a sitting duck, and a target too lucrative for enemy forces to pass up. They noted that Tomahawk cruise missiles cost \$1.3 million apiece, so loading up the ship would be extremely expensive, and losing one prohibitively so. The cost of munitions launched by one arsenal ship in a month-long campaign was estimated to be \$1 billion a day.⁵⁹ Since the project was still experimental, no one knew which shipyard would get the contract, so members of Congress were hesitant to support it, particularly since doing so might put at risk ongoing long-term contracts for carriers and submarines.⁶⁰ The project threatened the Air Force’s long-term recapitalization plans for its older B-52 and B-1 bomber programs. As Andrew Krepinevich noted, “The Air Force could feel itself crowded out by the arsenal ship.”⁶¹ The submariners thought the idea would be better realized by outfitting a retired *Ohio*-class SSBN to carry one hundred-fifty cruise missiles. (An idea that did materialize in the form of four such submarines.) Some surface officers thought the project would be funded at the expense of more conventional surface combatants.⁶²

⁵⁷ Edward J. Rhodes, “‘...From the Sea’ and Back Again: Naval Power in the Second American Century,” *Naval War College Review* 52, no. 2 (Spring 1999): 40–41.

⁵⁸ Mintz, “New Ship Could Be Next Wave in Warfare.”

⁵⁹ Eisman, “Arsenal Ship Wouldn’t Replace Carriers.”

⁶⁰ Lerman, “Bush Calls for Revival of Arsenal Ship.”

⁶¹ Mintz, “New Ship Could Be Next Wave in Warfare.”

⁶² Rhodes, “‘...From the Sea’ and Back Again,” 41.

Naval aviators were especially hostile to the project.⁶³ As Krepinevich noted, “The arsenal ship is the same challenge to aircraft carriers as the first carrier was in the 1920’s to battleships. It’s not going to make the carrier extinct overnight, but it will make it a less important part of the battle fleet.”⁶⁴ Aviators thought the arsenal ship was prohibitively expensive, not sophisticated enough to defend itself without considerable support, and deficient in capabilities beyond kinetic response. It was not versatile enough for a broader range of missions demanded by the CINCs.

F. JOHNSON SUCCEEDS BOORDA

It was neither intra-mural sniping nor inter-service rivalry that dispatched the arsenal ship, however, but the suicide of Admiral Boorda, who took his own life in May 1996 in the face of public controversy over his right to wear two medals dating from his service in Vietnam—the last straw, perhaps, for the man who had been obliged to sweep up after the humiliations of Tailhook and the sexual harassment and cheating scandals of the Naval Academy.⁶⁵ Boorda’s successor was Admiral Jay L. Johnson (1996–2000), who had been the vice CNO. At age 50, he was the second-youngest CNO after Admiral Zumwalt and the first aviator since Admiral Hayward. A 1968 Naval Academy graduate, Johnson was a fighter pilot with two combat tours in Vietnam. He had been a member of the Strategic Studies Group, and had attended the Armed Forces Staff College. Like Boorda, Johnson had a background in manpower, having served two tours in the Bureau of Personnel. Still, Johnson had relatively little experience in the Pentagon. His brilliance was rather understated, but one could not mistake that he was a rising star, having earned three of his four stars in the previous two years.

Admiral Johnson sought a low profile for himself and the Navy, and was generally skeptical about the value of top-down statements of strategic vision.⁶⁶ He was

⁶³ Ibid.

⁶⁴ Schmitt, “Aircraft Carrier May Give Way To Missile Ship.”

⁶⁵ See Nick Kotz, “Breaking Point,” *The Washingtonian* (December 1996): 95–122.

⁶⁶ Captain Joseph F. Bouchard, U.S. Navy (Ret.), email message to Peter M. Swartz, March 20, 2006.

less concerned about the direction of Navy strategy, which he regarded as well established, than about funding a new long-range heavy attack bomber.⁶⁷ Shortly before the Gulf War in 1991, Secretary of Defense Richard Cheney cancelled the Navy's A-12 carrier attack jet program. The stealth aircraft had been \$1 billion over budget and nowhere near ready to fly.⁶⁸ The A-12 was to replace the Vietnam-era A-6E Intruder, which was too slow to evade modern surface-to-air missile systems. In practice, however, there was already a lot of competition in place for the A-12's ostensible mission at a time when the Navy's aircraft procurement funds had been halved since the end of the Cold War.⁶⁹ The Air Force had two new strike aircraft, the F-117A and the F-15E, which had earned sterling reputations in the 1990–91 Gulf War. The case against replacing the A-6 was also undercut by the superb performance of the Navy's own Tomahawk cruise missile.⁷⁰

Absent the A-12, the future of the Navy's ability to deliver a punch with manned aircraft was pinned chiefly on the F/A-18E/F Super Hornet, the "cornerstone of the future of naval aviation" in Johnson's view.⁷¹ The Super Hornet was a heavier, longer-range version of the relatively light and short-range F/A-18C Hornet. The Super Hornet was forced to compete for budget space with two high-profile programs, the Air Force's revolutionary F-22 and the Joint Strike Fighter, the latter of which was to be produced for the Air Force, the Marine Corps, the Navy, and the British Royal Air Force, among

⁶⁷ See Dale Eisman, "In First Year, CNO Steadies the Crew, and Stays the Course," *The (Norfolk, VA) Virginian-Pilot*, May 31, 1997.

⁶⁸ See Otto Kreisher, "Pentagon Proposes to Renovate Navy's Carrier Air Program," *San Diego Union*, April 27, 1991.

⁶⁹ John Morrocco, "A-12 Loss Haunts Naval Aviation," U.S. Naval Institute *Proceedings* 118, no. 5 (May 1992): 92.

⁷⁰ As Barry Posen noted, "The problem the Navy created for itself, is that (it) proved that many of the targets you would customarily have allocated to a deep-attack aircraft can be successfully engaged by a Tomahawk, which can be widely distributed across the fleet. To the extent that that's true, you undercut the argument that you need large-deck carriers. That may be a hard lesson for the Navy to swallow. You could argue that Tomahawks put the last nails in the coffins of the A-6 and the A-12 strike aircraft." Melissa Healy, "Navy Riding Out Storm of Criticism of Gulf War Role," *Los Angeles Times*, April 28, 1991.

⁷¹ John Diamond, "New Versions of F-18 Cheapest of Contenders," *Fort Worth Star-Telegram*, March 30, 1997.

others. Unlike these two, the Super Hornet was neither revolutionary nor stealthy.⁷² It was a basic multi-purpose attack and fighter jet whose chief virtue lay in the fact that it would cost the Navy a half to a third as much as an aircraft designed and built from scratch.⁷³

In practice, however, the Navy had no choice. The all-weather long-range heavy attack mission lay at the heart of the carrier's power projecting capabilities, which in turn was the heart of the Navy's strategic vision. As former Secretary of the Navy John Lehman noted after the A-12 was cancelled, "Carriers are to be cut to 12 from 15—but without a replacement for the A-6Es, there isn't much point in having even 12."⁷⁴ For Johnson, "naval strategy" necessarily boiled down to securing funding for the Super Hornet because without it, the Navy could not project power in a manner that had been laid out in ...*From the Sea*.⁷⁵

G. CONCLUSION

Encouraged by the ad hoc pragmatism that characterized U.S. foreign policy during the second Clinton administration, the American defense establishment in the late 1990s was not thinking about grand strategy. Given the freedom to ponder their shopping lists, and with the additional encouragement provided by increasing budgetary stringency, the leaders of the armed forces were preoccupied with what they thought were more pressing items. Steeped in a milieu of system analysis, programmatics, and congressional interests, these industrial-managerial technocrats saw their problems in terms of how best to optimize the military's warfighting ability given technological opportunities, Goldwater-Nichols, and a fiscally restrained environment. Their focus was on how to

⁷² Ibid.

⁷³ William Flannery, "On the Line – McDonnell and the Navy are Counting on the Super Hornet," *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*, September 25, 1995.

⁷⁴ John F. Lehman Jr., "Most Anti-Navy Budget In 14 Years," *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*, February 20, 1991.

⁷⁵ Captain Peter M. Swartz, U.S. Navy (Ret.), discussion with the author, June 19, 2009, Alexandria, VA.

make decisions more efficient and consensual, which is not the same as making effective decisions. As Colin Gray noted, “It can be a revelation that armed forces have been known to be so self-absorbed in the complex task of managing themselves that they forget what they are for.”⁷⁶ In these respects the outlook of the Navy’s leadership, as with those of its sister services, followed that of OSD and the Joint Staff.

To oppose the Big Ideas—jointness and the Revolution in Military Affairs—was becoming more difficult and risky, particular after 1990–91 Gulf War and Bosnia, successes that made it easy for defense officials to dismiss well-argued skepticism as the self-serving arguments of dinosaurs who refused to adapt.⁷⁷ Neither jointness nor the Revolution in Military Affairs had much to do with strategy, however, except perhaps in the negative sense that they encouraged the assumption that tactical results would speak for themselves. The fixation on optimizing the military to realize decisive victory through advanced technology tended to obfuscate the difference between *warfare*, the act of waging war, with *war*, the use of warfare for political purpose. Both jointness and the Revolution in Military Affairs, in any case, were about warfighting of a rather peculiar kind—one that conceived the enemy as an array of targets, whose efficient destruction was the overarching purpose of military force. The generic requirement to destroy targets with precise means relieved the military from the more difficult task of relating the results of such destruction to political goals, which were assumed to materialize at some point.

In some respects, however, the direction of foreign and defense policy that emerged during Clinton’s last years in office was in alignment with at least some strands of Navy thinking. In practice, the Clinton foreign policy was about forward presence, crisis management, and air power-intensive, risk-averse power projection. In such circumstances, the Tomahawk cruise missile was proving invaluable as a means of

⁷⁶ Colin S. Gray, “Strategic Thoughts for Defence Planners,” *Survival* 52, no. 3 (June–July 2010): 160.

⁷⁷ Frederick W. Kagan, *Finding the Target: The Transformation of American Military Policy* (New York, NY: Encounter Books, 2006), 321.

coercive diplomacy by virtue of its ability to limit both collateral damage and the chances that U.S. or NATO aircrews would be captured. It could be launched from a variety of ships and submarines that were more or less continuously on station in crisis-ridden areas. On the whole, the Navy's forward deployed structure, flexible fleet, and expeditionary experiences were demonstrating the service's worth in the eyes of the CINCs. The direction of defense planning, with its emphasis on precision air power and power projection in general, was also well aligned with the Navy's strategic vision of carrier- and Tomahawk-led power projection.

"2020 Vision" advanced the notion that the Navy and not the Air Force should be the military's primary enabler of decisive strike warfare. It promised a fleet structured around a dominant, specialized mission—an attractive idea in budgetary terms perhaps, but one sharply at odds with the outlook of OPNAV's Strategy and Concepts branch (N513), whose Naval Operational Concept continued to emphasize a carrier-led fleet in which "balance" was associated with flexibility across a wide range of kinetic and non-kinetic missions. This potentially crippling divergence was resolved by default. CNO Johnson never signed out "2020 Vision," and let the arsenal ship project die from lack of support. In the end, no tough decisions were called for, and none were made. Given the generally supportive direction of foreign and defense policy, there was nothing to motivate a need for an alternative strategic approach, one that sought to advance a systemic grand strategy.

Throughout this period, the best strategic minds in the Navy were concerned chiefly with how to elevate the Navy's partnership with the Marine Corps beyond rhetoric, and how to advance the Navy's relevance in the joint doctrine arena. Writing Navy doctrine was itself a daunting problem. The Navy had little interest or institutionalized capacity to do such a thing during the Cold War (other than that needed to operate with the navies of NATO allies). The rise of jointness made the writing of naval doctrine an imperative, however, and with it the need to find a mechanism to bridge the conceptual gulf between the Navy and the Marine Corps. The Naval Operational Concept, which was cancelled shortly after Boorda's death, was a bridge too far for

conceptual as well as bureaucratic reasons.⁷⁸ “I take nothing away from the Marine Corps,” noted a senior admiral. “They’re awesome. I love ’em. But they’re also very good and very aggressive and relentless in their pursuit of things for the Marine Corps. What the hell’s wrong with that? Nothing! But when you’re both vying for the same resources, it’s tough. It’s hardball.”⁷⁹ As one senior Marine stated, “The relationship between the Navy and the Marine Corps, inside the Beltway, is tied to resources. When resources are tight, I don’t care whether the CNO and the commandant are in love with each other, it is not going to be pretty.”⁸⁰

The Navy’s interest in doctrine faded after CNO Kelso’s departure. In terms of institutional importance, prominence, and expertise, the Naval Doctrine Command never measured up to its Army and Marine Corps counterparts. Nor could it. Unlike the Naval Doctrine Command, these two institutions were established in the early twentieth century, led by a four-star and a three-star, respectively, and staffed by upwardly mobile officers. In 1998, the Naval Doctrine Command—which was never to be commanded by a Marine, leaving unfilled a promise made in ...*From the Sea*—was moved from Norfolk to the Naval War College in Newport, Rhode Island, and renamed the Navy Warfare Development Command (which, in 2009, was moved back to Norfolk and placed under U.S. Fleet Forces Command). To this day, NDP-3, *Naval Operations*, has not been released.

There was a revolution of a sort in Navy doctrine during the 1990s, however. It was not about the Navy-Marine Corps team, however. And it did not really require that anything much be written down. It was about naval aviation’s de facto adoption of Air Force-based doctrine that had resulted from the integration of carrier aviation with land-based strike forces of the Air Force, a process that unfolded more or less organically in the course of shared Navy-Air Force operations like Southern Watch and Deliberate

⁷⁸ Bouchard, email, March 20, 2006.

⁷⁹ Tom Philpott, “Full Speed Ahead,” *Washingtonian* 34, no. 10 (July 1999): 94.

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*

Force. The revolution was a direct response to the inadequacies of naval aviation that had surfaced during the 1990–91 Gulf War. This practical success further reinforced the Big Ideas of jointness and the Revolution in Military Affairs, all of which did much to shift the Navy’s operational outlook, not toward global and systemic requirements, however, but toward the problems of warfighting on land.

VIII. ANYTIME, ANYWHERE, 1996–97

A. JOINT VISION 2010: THE MILITARY’S NEW TEMPLATE

In July 1996, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff General John Shalikashvili released *Joint Vision 2010*, one of the most influential documents of the post-Cold War era.¹ It was a glossy, purple-jacketed publication filled with thirty-four pages of photographs, schematic drawings, and double-spaced paragraphs that defined the operational concepts and capabilities the Services needed to support the chairman’s warfighting requirements.² Like the recommendations of the Joint Resource Oversight Council, the Chairman’s Program Recommendations, and the Chairman’s Program Assessments, the purpose of *Joint Vision 2010* was to influence the Services’ resource decisions.³ As the first “vision” released by the chairman, it was intended to ensure that those conducting the 1997 Quadrennial Defense Review (QDR) understood the chairman’s thinking.⁴ The QDR was the result of a recommendation from the Commission on Roles and Missions in 1995 that an independent panel at the start of each presidential term shall conduct a “quadrennial strategy review.” As a RAND study noted,

Joint Vision 2010 had a profound influence on the Services’ ability to identify mid- to long-term requirements....The Joint Staff has encouraged the Services to continue their own institutional vision work and strategic planning activities, but these activities must be responsive to JV2010 [*Joint Vision 2010*] and the JVIMP [Joint Vision Implementation

¹ *Joint Vision 2010*, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff General John M. Shalikashvili, U.S. Army (Washington, DC: Department of Defense, Government Printing Office, July 1996).

² Philip Gold, “The Army’s Fancy PR and Glossy Pictures,” *Washington Times*, August 13, 1996. “Purple” is a synonym for jointness, a symbolic mixture of the Services’ traditional institutional colors.

³ Leslie Lewis, Roger Allen Brown, and C. Robert Roll, *Service Responses to the Emergence of Joint Decisionmaking* (Santa Monica, CA: RAND, 2001), 23.

⁴ Frederick W. Kagan, *Finding the Target: The Transformation of American Military Policy* (New York, NY: Encounter Books, 2006), 227.

Plan]....[Even though] there is formal legislation or DoD [Department of Defense] regulation that requires the Services to support or respond to [them].⁵

The chairman had gone from *providing* strategic guidance and submitting to the secretary of defense alternative recommendations for the Services' program choices and budget proposals to *governing* their visions and resource decisions.⁶ Rooted in the Cold War, the trends of centralized decision-making and, as will be seen, prescribed patterns of military thought were being fully realized in the post-Cold War era.

The dominant issues in *Joint Vision 2010* were not strategic, but operational. As Shalikashvili noted, *Joint Vision 2010* “provides an operationally based template for the evolution of the Armed Forces...It *must* become a benchmark for Service and Unified Command visions.”⁷ *Joint Vision 2010* had four organizing principles: 1) dominant maneuver; 2) precision engagement; 3) full dimensional protection; and 4) focused logistics. *Joint Vision 2010* was not about explaining how American grand strategic goals would be realized. It declared that the military's primary task was “to deter conflict—but, should deterrence fail, to fight and win our nation's wars,” and that “power projection, enabled by overseas presence, will likely remain the fundamental strategic concept of our future force.”⁸ *Joint Vision 2010* sought to increase warfighting effectiveness by finding efficiencies: “To retain our effectiveness with less redundancy, we will need to wring every ounce of capability from every available source. That outcome can only be

⁵ Lewis, Brown, and Roll, *Service Responses*, 23–24.

⁶ General Shalikashvili's changes overturned a tacit agreement made in the late 1980s between OSD, the chairman, and the Services, which held the chairman and the CINCs would determine warfighting requirements in the near-term, while the Services would determine those in the mid and long-term in accordance with their Title 10 responsibilities. *Ibid.*, 29.

⁷ *Joint Vision 2010*, i. Emphasis added.

⁸ *Ibid.*, 4.

accomplished through a more seamless integration of Service capabilities.”⁹ If there had ever been any question that jointness was ultimately about “economy of force,” Shalikashvili had answered it.¹⁰

Along with corporate reorganization, another way to realize efficiencies was through technology, *Joint Vision 2010*’s primary theme.¹¹ *Joint Vision 2010* embraced the need to realize the Revolution in Military Affairs. New information technologies would link “all-source” intelligence, sensors, and platforms to command and control organizations in ways that would improve “the ability to see, prioritize, assign, and assess information.... [and] collect, process, and distribute relevant data to thousands of locations.”¹² In so doing, the United States “will gain *dominant battlespace awareness*, an interactive ‘picture’ which will yield much more accurate assessments of friendly and enemy operations.”¹³ There was no doubt, however, about which technology was the most important: “Long-range precision capability, combined with a wide range of delivery systems, is emerging as a key factor in future warfare.”¹⁴ *Joint Vision 2010* concluded that “The combination of these technology trends will provide an order of magnitude improvement in lethality. Commanders will be able to attack targets successfully with fewer platforms and less ordnance while achieving objectives more rapidly and with reduced risk.”¹⁵

For all intents and purposes, *Joint Vision 2010* was a theory of strategic air power rendered more lethal and efficient by new information technologies. As Fred Kagan noted, *Joint Vision 2010* was essentially a watered down version of the Air Force’s “nearly airpower-pure doctrines” of *Dominant Battlespace Knowledge* and *Shock and*

⁹ Ibid., 8–9.

¹⁰ Kagan, *Finding the Target*, 229.

¹¹ See *Joint Vision 2010*, 11–15.

¹² Ibid., 13.

¹³ Ibid. Emphasis in the original.

¹⁴ Ibid., 11.

¹⁵ Ibid., 13.

Awe.¹⁶ Both doctrines saw war as an exercise in determining, identifying, and destroying targets, with the former attriting enemy forces in the field and the latter destroying, isolating, manipulating, and otherwise disorienting the enemy's leadership. Jointness came to be understood as involving little more than the integration of the services' informational and kinetic technologies to deliver an efficient, swift, and unambiguous victory over a generic and otherwise inert foe in support of (if not in lieu of) tactical-level forces on the ground.

B. THE ROOTS OF THE NAVY OPERATIONAL CONCEPT

Joint Vision 2010 did not obviate the need for the Navy to formulate a major doctrinal statement of its own. If anything, it made it more imperative. More than ever, joint visions and doctrine were governing the Services' decisions, while the Services' avenues to influence U.S. strategy and defense policy had narrowed. Joint doctrine was proving to be a competitive battleground for the Services to push weapons and concepts that served their respective interests. This placed at an advantage those services that were already organized around doctrine—the Army and the Marine Corps—as well as those that were already adept at developing innovative concepts, namely the Marine Corps and the Air Force. The Navy had yet to find anything to influence that process, and needed a work-around for the stalled NDP-3 *Naval Operations* endeavor. No doubt Admiral Jay Johnson remembered all too clearly how the Navy had been marginalized in the 1990–91 Gulf War because it was not on board with what was then considered joint doctrine.

Yet, many admirals outside the Pentagon could not understand the importance of joint doctrine or the need to correct the service's dismissive attitude toward doctrine in

¹⁶ See Kagan, *Finding the Target*, 230. For his description of *Dominant Battlespace Knowledge* and *Shock and Awe*, see 212–222. The outstanding work on *Dominant Battlespace Knowledge* is *Dominant Battlespace Knowledge: The Winning Edge*, ed. Stuart E. Johnson and Martin C. Libicki (Washington, DC: National Defense University, 1995). *Shock and Awe* is based on Harlan K. Ullman and James P. Wade with L.A. Edney, Fred M. Franks, Charles A. Horner, and Jonathan T. Howe, *Shock and Awe: Achieving Rapid Dominance* (Washington, DC: Center for Advanced Concepts and Technology, 1996).

general.¹⁷ Johnson wanted to elevate the importance of doctrine, invigorate doctrinal thinking, and end criticism from the Marine Corps and others that the Navy did not have an “operational concept.” Although he had no wish to burn bridges to the Marine Corps, Johnson wanted a Navy answer to its *Operational Maneuver from the Sea* that affirmed the Navy’s value not just in the prosecution of regional conflict or amphibious operations, but across the board.

Commander Joe Bouchard, the chief of OPNAV’s Strategy and Concepts branch (N513), was tasked to lead the effort to draft a *Navy Operational Concept*, as distinct from a *naval* one.¹⁸ Johnson told Bouchard to work with Vice Admiral Art Cebrowski, OPNAV’s director of Space, Information Warfare, and Command and Control (N6), to incorporate Cebrowski’s innovative ideas. These ideas would later crystallize into what would be known as “network-centric warfare,” which would come to dominate American strategic thinking in the post-Cold War era. Johnson, who was not a visionary or an innovator, but knew Cebrowski well and believed that the Navy had to harness Cebrowski’s visionary concepts.

Cebrowski believed that the industrialized violence of the world wars was too inherently indiscriminate to address contemporary strategic requirements, and, specifically, that its callousness toward civilian casualties was immoral.¹⁹ To Cebrowski, the technologies of the so-called Information Age offered a more discrete and efficient use of violence. Vice Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Admiral Bill Owens and Cebrowski—who, during its development, had been the director of Command, Control, Communications, and Computers (J6) on the Joint Staff before he left to become OPNAV’s N6—shaped *Joint Vision 2010*.²⁰

¹⁷ Paragraph based on Captain Joseph F. Bouchard, U.S. Navy (Ret.), email messages to Peter M. Swartz, April 8, 2005, June 27, 2005, and March 20, 2006.

¹⁸ Paragraph based on Bouchard, email, March 20, 2006.

¹⁹ See James R. Blaker, *Transforming Military Force: The Legacy of Arthur Cebrowski and Network Centric Warfare* (Westport, CT: Praeger Security International, 2007), 18–19.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, 14.

Vice Admiral Cebrowski was among a small number of influential and visionary admirals who came to the fore in the 1990s. These officers were the post-Cold War equivalents of those who had led the Navy in the 1950s, none more so than CNO Arleigh Burke. Over their careers, Admirals Cebrowski, Jerry O. Tuttle, Archie R. Clemens, Wayne E. Meyer, and even Bill Owens to a degree, had immersed themselves in the use of computers and information technologies to solve operational problems. They were well suited to the critical task of overhauling the Navy's command, control, communications, and intelligence systems, which increased capabilities in surveillance, target acquisition, and precision-guided munitions, among others.

The Navy Operational Concept was drafted primarily by Bouchard and Cebrowski—which, as Bouchard admitted, were a rather odd pair.²¹ Cebrowski was a cerebral “technologist” who sought to apply advanced commercial computer and network technologies to the problem of organizing naval and joint forces to defeat a generic enemy ashore. Bouchard was a self-styled “maneuverist,” one of a group of mostly surface officers in OPNAV's Strategy, Plans, and Policy Division (N51) who saw naval maneuver warfare as an attractive organizing principle that was fully consonant with the Navy's traditional preference for decentralized command structures, a minimum of doctrine, and empowering on-scene commanders to seize the initiative. Bouchard also believed that maneuver warfare was consonant with the direction of joint doctrine, which was understood in the Navy as following *AirLand Battle's* construct of integrating precision interdiction strike warfare and close air support with maneuvering armored forces.

Bouchard and Cebrowski agreed that network-centric warfare could take the theory of maneuver warfare to the next level of sophistication, thereby providing the Navy with an opportunity to drive joint doctrine instead of reacting to it. Throughout late 1996, Bouchard spent many hours after work in Cebrowski's office trying to envision an

²¹ Paragraph based on Bouchard, emails, April 8, 2005 and March 20, 2006.

approach to naval maneuver warfare that embraced Cebrowski's somewhat enigmatic ideas about the role of information in a way that would be comprehensible to the average fleet officer.

C. THE NAVY OPERATIONAL CONCEPT

The Navy Operational Concept was completed in January 1997. Despite having appeared only six months after *Joint Vision 2010*, it was organized around the much broader *National Military Strategy*, which saw the military's purpose not in terms of jointness, technology, or the battlefield, but in terms of its four pillars of *peacetime engagement, deterrence and conflict prevention*, and *fight and win*. The perspective of the *National Military Strategy* was much more accommodating to the need for the forward deployment of naval forces, and highlighted their full-spectrum capabilities.²² Those capabilities stemmed from the "advantages of operating on, under, above and from the sea."²³ It noted that "The primary purpose of forward-deployed naval forces is to project American power from the sea to influence events ashore in the littoral regions of the world across the operational spectrum of peace, crisis and war."²⁴ A critical advantage of forward deployed naval forces was providing "on-scene capabilities" that contributed to *peacetime engagement, deterrence and conflict prevention*, without violating any nation's sovereignty—a result of being able to operate in international waters.²⁵ *Peacetime engagement* was said to produce the "sense of security" needed to enlarge the number of free-market democracies, which was important because democracies were presumed to be less likely to threaten U.S. interests and more willing

²² *National Military Strategy of the United States of America, 1995: A Strategy of Flexible and Selective Engagement* (Washington, DC: Department of Defense, Government Printing Office, February 1995), i–ii.

²³ Admiral Jay L. Johnson, "The Navy Operational Concept: Forward...From the Sea," *Seapower* 40, no. 5 (May 1997): 16.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, 16.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, 15 and 16.

to cooperate.²⁶ Deployed naval forces contributed to *deterrence and conflict prevention* because they were always at the highest readiness level and possessed “combat credible” capabilities that could transition rapidly from peace to crisis to war.²⁷ They could apply force in a much more nuanced manner than the other services. The broad range of options that naval forces presented would leave a potential aggressor uncertain as to what course of action the United States would take. Naval forces could react to ambiguous warning signs that would not, in themselves, justify costly reactive deployments by U.S.-based forces, making naval forces “a potent and cost-effective alternative to power projection from the continental United States.”²⁸

The Navy Operational Concept noted that the United States usually enters a conflict only in response to naked aggression against U.S. interests or allies.²⁹ As a result, U.S. and allied forces find themselves on the defensive until reinforcements have arrived, disembarked, and deployed into the field. Until that time, naval forces help to *fight and win*. “Our ability to deliver a wide range of naval firepower and generate very high aircraft sortie rates can have major impact on the course and outcome of a conflict, especially during this critical early period of a joint campaign, when continental U.S.-based forces are just starting to arrive in theater.”³⁰ Naval forces could also “Take advantage of our robust command and control systems and the reach of our sensors and weapons to concentrate combat power from dispersed, networked forces and project power far inland.”³¹ In responding to “contingencies of limited size and duration,” U.S. naval forces might exert a “decisive impact” in themselves.³² In larger conflicts, they

²⁶ Ibid., 18.

²⁷ Ibid., 21.

²⁸ Ibid., 16–17.

²⁹ Clearly, however, this was not the case in conflicts in Bosnia (1995), Kosovo (1999), Iraq (2003), and Libya (2011), among others.

³⁰ Ibid., 20.

³¹ Ibid., 19.

³² Ibid.

were deemed an “integral” element of joint operations³³—a modest retreat from the claims in ...*From the Sea* and “2020 Vision” that naval forces could be decisive in larger and more protracted conflicts. The Navy had thus finally come around to an “integrated” understanding of jointness, thanks largely to Cebrowski’s ideas about networking, and the Navy’s desire for fleet flagships and carriers that could provide fully equipped afloat command centers for joint task force commanders.

The *fight and win* section of the Navy Operational Concept is where Bouchard attempted to reconcile maneuver and network-centric warfare most rigorously, arguing that the concepts of naval operational maneuver and “speed of command” could be combined with decisive effect. “Operational maneuver” meant leveraging the right of navies to operate unimpeded in international waters, a right that, in the American case, was enhanced by the improbability that an enemy navy might wish to contest the issue. Naval forces can, by nature, concentrate and disperse rapidly; they can move constantly and change capabilities with the additions of different kinds of ships. They can appear to be a distant presence, yet strike suddenly with either precision naval “fires” (i.e., bombs, missiles, or gunfire) or by landing Marines ashore.³⁴ Naval forces exemplified “the ability to rapidly collect information, assess the situation, develop a course of action, and immediately execute it.”³⁵ Such “speed of command” was said to resemble the operation of the contemporary high-tech marketplace, where “disproportionately larger returns for relatively modest, but precisely placed, initial investments” could be achieved. The aim overall was to “lock out enemy solutions, while locking in our success.”³⁶

The primary criticism leveled against the Navy Operational Concept by the Navy’s three- and four-star admirals was that it did not sufficiently emphasize the time-honored “war-fighting” themes and operational virtues used to justify Navy programs in

³³ Ibid., 16 and 19.

³⁴ Ibid., 21.

³⁵ Ibid.

³⁶ Ibid.

the past.³⁷ They did not disagree with its ideas on maneuver or network-centric warfare, but they did not see how those ideas could help defend the Navy's budget.³⁸ As led by N8, OPNAV was completely tied up with attempting to shape the direction of the QDR and readying arguments for its release in the spring of 1997. The congressionally mandated QDR and *Joint Vision 2010* were both all too clearly an extension of the Air Force's recently revitalized conception of strategic air power—which was claimed to have been rendered more effective and precise by the same technologies the Navy was claiming as its own. There were fears that the embrace of long-range strike warfare as the essence of “jointness” might overturn the established post-war apportionment of the defense budget—24 percent for the Army, 29 percent for the Air Force, and 32 percent for both the Navy and Marine Corps—in favor of the Air Force.³⁹

The post-Cold War era budgetary battles and the preeminent stature of N8 within OPNAV were permeating everything in OPNAV. Even though the Navy Operational Concept's purpose had nothing to do with programs, the implication was that *anything* that came out of OPNAV was related to the battle of the budget, and therefore had to be bottom-lined by N8.⁴⁰ This assumption had always reinforced service parochialism in the Navy's strategic statements, and stifled independent thinking in N5.⁴¹

These considerations led to the decision not to publish the Navy Operational Concept in the usual way. Instead, it was emailed to the Navy's admirals and then posted on the Internet in January 1997.⁴² This approach reflected Johnson's skepticism about

³⁷ Bouchard, email, March 20, 2006.

³⁸ Ibid.

³⁹ George C. Wilson, *This War Really Matters: Inside the Fight for Defense Dollars* (Washington, DC: Congressional Quarterly, 2000), 39.

⁴⁰ Bouchard, email, March 20, 2006.

⁴¹ Ibid.

⁴² Paragraph based on Bouchard, email, April 8, 2005. The full title of “The Navy Operational Concept; Forward...From the Sea” was meant to portray that it was to implement *Forward...From the Sea*, not replace it. Interestingly, *Forward...From the Sea* had no impact on the Navy Operational Concept. It was not referenced during its writing, and mentioned only to garner more support. Bouchard, email, April 8, 2005.

strategic statements in general, as well as his desire to keep a low profile and avoid the impression that the new statement was replacing *Forward...From the Sea*. Secretary of the Navy John Dalton had been emphatic that he did not want another “vision” during his tenure.

Yet, the fact remains that the Navy Operational Concept has proven to be one of the Navy’s most innovative post-war documents. Only later, in May 1997, was the decision made to publish it in a periodical, and then not in *Proceedings*, the Navy’s professional journal, but in *Sea Power*, the magazine of the Navy League, a civilian not-for-profit organization established to educate Americans on the importance of sea power.

The Navy Operational Concept was all but ignored in the Navy, and failed to invigorate doctrinal thinking, at least partly because of the half-hearted way in which it was promulgated. Over time, however, its influence grew, chiefly as a launching pad for further work on network-centric warfare. Because it promised to increase performance and cost efficiencies by means of precision strike warfare, network-centric warfare became increasingly synonymous with jointness in the next decade, and would become the centerpiece of the Pentagon’s efforts to “transform” the military.

D. “ANYTIME, ANYWHERE”

The Navy Operational Concept had not been conceived as the Navy’s way of rogering-up to *Joint Vision 2010*, and the pianissimo way in which it had been sent out into the world insured that it would not be perceived as satisfying that obvious need. While the Army and the Air Force had produced *Army Vision 2010* and *Global Engagement: A Vision of the 21st Century Air Force*, respectively, the Navy’s “vision” remained *Forward...From the Sea*, published in 1994. Secretary Dalton did not see a need to replace it.⁴³ Nor had the Navy responded to three national-level strategic documents, all of which came out in May 1997: the QDR; General Shalikashvili’s new *National*

⁴³ Ibid.

Military Strategy: Shape, Respond, Prepare Now; and the Clinton administration's *National Security Strategy for A New Century*.

Meanwhile, the fleet continued to decrement. It went from the Base Force's 451 ships (later 416) to the Bottom-Up Review's 346, and then to the 1997 QDR's 305 (later 310).⁴⁴ By the summer of 1997, the fleet numbered 354 ships, with the construction of only four procured in fiscal year 1997, and five authorized for the year after.⁴⁵ As Vice CNO Donald Pilling noted, "If we can buy eight to ten ships a year, that will keep us about three hundred ships. That's sort of where our redline is."⁴⁶ Johnson's low-key lobbying of Congress was not unsuccessful; he was able to maintain support for the F/A-18E/F Super Hornet, the Navy's presence missions, and twelve carriers.

To many in OPNAV, however, the Navy's silence in the marketplace of ideas was deafening, to the point where the lack of a CNO-signed vision was causing the Navy's warfare communities to advance their own self-serving visions. To many in Washington, it appeared the Navy was unable or unwilling to defend itself from the Air Force's attack on the alleged inadequacies of the Super Hornet, and, in a larger sense, to make the case for its relevance.⁴⁷ As one reporter noted, "Though Johnson's understated style has ruffled no feathers, it had some Navy boosters on Capitol Hill privately worried this spring that he and the service would be outmaneuvered in the Pentagon's deliberations over the *Quadrennial Defense Review*."⁴⁸

By the late summer of 1997, several high-ranking admirals in OPNAV had convinced Johnson to promulgate a vision, whose development would be overseen by an

⁴⁴ Ronald O'Rourke, "Navy Force Structure and Shipbuilding Plans: Background and Issues for Congress" (Washington, DC: Congressional Research Service, July 15, 2009), 29.

⁴⁵ Ibid., 33 and 34.

⁴⁶ Wilson, *This War Really Matters*, 57.

⁴⁷ Dale Eisman, "In First Year, CNO Steadies the Crew, and Stays the Course," *The (Norfolk, VA) Virginian-Pilot*, May 31, 1997.

⁴⁸ Ibid.

ad hoc brain trust called the “CNO Strategic Planning Group.”⁴⁹ The group consisted of the vice CNO, Admiral Pilling, Vice Admirals Art Cebrowski (N6: Navy Space, Information Warfare, and Command and Control), James Ellis (N3/N5: Operations, Plans and Policies), Conrad Lautenbacher (N8: Resources, Warfare Requirements, and Assessments), Rear Admiral Kendall Pease (Chief of Naval Information, i.e., the Navy Department’s chief public affairs official), and Captain R. Robinson “Robby” Harris, the director of the CNO’s Executive Panel (N00K). Johnson was willing to give the vision a shot, but wanted it in the form of a *Proceedings* article, which was drafted by Captain Ed Smith, who worked for Harris. Smith had authored “2020 Vision” for Admiral Mike Boorda, which Smith had reportedly used as the basis for the new article.

The article came out in the November 1997 issue.⁵⁰ At less than three pages, “Anytime, Anywhere: A Navy for the 21st Century” was considerably shorter than previous articles by CNOs.⁵¹ There was also a puzzling (in the circumstances) lack of relationship between the Navy Operational Concept, developed in N5, and “Anytime, Anywhere,” a product of the CNO’s Executive Panel.⁵² While the former was meant to catalyze American naval doctrine and vault the Navy into a leading role in joint doctrine, “Anytime, Anywhere” was CNO Johnson’s vision of the Navy’s role in U.S. security. The article displayed a blend of familiar ideas and held tight to a narrow, operationally oriented interpretation of the service’s purpose, which accorded with Johnson’s focus on

⁴⁹ Paragraph based on Peter M. Swartz with Karin Duggan, “U.S. Navy Capstone Strategies and Concepts (1991–2000): Strategy, Policy, Concept, and Vision Documents,” PowerPoint brief in PDF (Alexandria, VA: Center for Naval Analyses, March 2012), 126, slide 252, <http://www.cna.org/research/2012/us-navy-capstone-strategies-concepts-1991-2000>.

⁵⁰ Admiral Jay L. Johnson, “Anytime, Anywhere: A Navy for the 21st Century,” U.S. Naval Institute *Proceedings* 123, no. 11 (November 1997): 48–50.

⁵¹ Its catchy title came from the motto of Captain Harris’s former command, Destroyer Squadron 32, which was “Anywhere, Anytime.” (And it also reflected an unofficial motto of the F-14 fighter community, “Anytime, Baby.”) Captain R. Robinson Harris, U.S. Navy (Ret.), manuscript notes to Peter M. Swartz and Captain Edward A. Smith Jr., U.S. Navy (Ret.), email message to John Hattendorf, July 10, 2006 both as cited in *U.S. Naval Strategy in the 1990s: Selected Documents*, ed. John B. Hattendorf, Newport Paper 27 (Newport, RI: Naval War College, 2006), 172.

⁵² Bouchard, email, March 20, 2006.

“operational primacy.”⁵³ As Johnson noted, the Navy’s purpose “is to influence, directly and decisively, events ashore from the sea—anytime, anywhere. That straightforward statement is the core of my vision....It describes who we are and what we do.”⁵⁴ The article claimed that the Navy was redefining American sea power to shape the strategic environment and deter conflict, stop the actions of an aggressor, or enable the entry of heavier joint forces.⁵⁵ The task to reorient American naval power to influence events ashore was said to be greater “than any other Navy has ever undertaken.”⁵⁶

“Anytime, Anywhere” focused on warfighting, noting that a “military force that cannot win is worthless, in war and peace,” and reasserted the independent decisiveness of naval power, which had been muted somewhat in the Navy Operational Concept.⁵⁷ Presence missions were not related to anything but preventing crisis and conflict. The terms “democracy,” “free-trade,” and “globalization” were not mentioned anywhere. Forward naval forces were conceived as a “force-in-being,” a part of the region’s local security calculus that aggressor states could not ignore. It offered a generalized tribute to Cebrowski’s ideas, noting that

We stand on the threshold of a new century, in an era of almost dizzying technological change. Change is our ally. It presents an unprecedented opportunity to transform the face of warfare, to give a new dimension to sea power, and to expand enormously the contribution [of] the U.S. Navy.... In short, we will possess the means to disorient and shock an enemy sufficiently to break his resistance.⁵⁸

This was, of course, the language of *Joint Vision 2010* and the Air Force’s *Shock and Awe*. The article did not address the Marines’ role, which perhaps reflected the growing

⁵³ “Operational primacy” was one of CNO Johnson’s guiding “stars,” with the others being leadership, teamwork, and pride. See Johnson, “The Navy Operational Concept,” 15.

⁵⁴ Johnson, “Anytime, Anywhere,” 48.

⁵⁵ Ibid.

⁵⁶ Ibid., 49.

⁵⁷ Ibid.

⁵⁸ Ibid., 48 and 50.

divergence with the Marine Corps, which was already moving on to another operational concept, called the Three-Block War, which did not rely much on the Navy.⁵⁹ In the 1990s, the Marines were responding to lower intensity crises on the order of once every five weeks—three times the incidence of the late Cold War.⁶⁰ These crises were increasingly complex and chaotic, characterized by lack of local governance, proliferation of small-arms, and decentralized actions by non-state actors, a scenario much like that of Somalia. Commandant of the Marine Corps General Charles Krulak believed that such scenarios might well require Marines to conduct at the same time full-scale combat operations on one city block, peacekeeping operations among ethnic groups in an adjacent block, and humanitarian assistance on the next block—hence Three-Block War.⁶¹

“Anytime, Anywhere” displayed no comparable engagement with contemporary realities. Instead, it was organized around what Vice Admiral Stansfield Turner had defined in his 1974 *The Missions of the U.S. Navy* as the Navy’s four essential missions.⁶² These were: 1) power projection; 2) presence; 3) strategic deterrence (both nuclear and conventional); and 4) sea control. At its core, American security was said to have one prerequisite—sea control, which now included “area control” in the littoral, the achievement of which was said to be the Navy’s greatest challenge.⁶³ “If we cannot command the seas and the airspace above them,” it noted, “we cannot project power to command or influence events ashore; we cannot deter; we cannot shape the security environment. That is a consequence of our geography; it will not change in the 21st

⁵⁹ See General Charles C. Krulak, U.S. Marine Corps, “The Strategic Corporal: Leadership in the Three Block War,” *Marines Magazine*, January 1999, http://www.au.af.mil/au/awc/awcgate/usmc/strategic_corporal.htm.

⁶⁰ Ibid.

⁶¹ Ibid.

⁶² Swartz, “U.S. Navy Capstone Strategies and Concepts (1991–2000),” 128, slide 255. See Vice Admiral Stansfield Turner, “Missions of the U.S. Navy,” *Naval War College Review* 26, no. 5 (March–April 1974): 2–17.

⁶³ Johnson, “Anytime, Anywhere,” 50.

century.”⁶⁴ Few documents in the 1990s raised the issue of sea control more emphatically than “Anytime, Anywhere,” a trend that was to continue, and was in part due to the need to support arguments for the new *Virginia*-class fast attack submarine, the planned replacement for the Cold War’s *Los Angeles*-class.

The article also expressed some reservations about the direction of U.S. strategy, calculated to blunt the Air Force’s extravagant claims about the decisiveness of strategic air power:

There is no simple, absolute technological answer to all our warfare problems. We cannot assume that our future conflicts will be swift and bloodless. We still will face many contingencies in which more traditional combat capabilities on land and at sea will be needed and may be our only option.⁶⁵

In a decade that was all about the salutary promises of technology, this statement was one of the few occasions between 1989 and 2007 when the Navy bluntly pushed against the simplistic assumption that technology was the answer to the nation’s strategic questions.

In the fleet, “Anytime, Anywhere” was probably more popular than any strategic statement since ...*From the Sea*. It was short, fairly easy to read, and, in a time of self-doubt, its title articulated the understanding of how the institution saw its purpose. Yet the article had little impact elsewhere. Like the Navy Operational Concept, “Anytime, Anywhere” lacked CNO ownership and follow-up.⁶⁶ Admiral Johnson held to a low public profile and focused on the Super Hornet. The article was perhaps too manifestly parochial, too out of step with U.S. strategy and policy. Arguments about the “decisiveness” of naval forces were simply not being borne out in operations overseas. The scenarios envisioned in ...*From the Sea*, which emphasized the integration of the

⁶⁴ Ibid., 49.

⁶⁵ Ibid.

⁶⁶ Swartz, “U.S. Navy Capstone Strategies and Concepts (1991–2000),” 132, slide 263. Even in the issue of *Proceedings*, “Anytime, Anywhere” did not receive top billing. Instead, it was buried in the middle of an issue that had a Marine Corps theme, which was a bit puzzling as few CNOs published articles, particularly Admiral Johnson.

Navy and the Marine Corps for warfare in the littoral, just were not panning out, to the point where it was becoming obvious that the two services were on their separate ways. Still, while neither was immediately influential, the network-centric ideas and the renewed emphasis on sea control in the Navy Operational Concept and “Anytime, Anywhere” would influence future documents over time. In the short term, these ideas were combined with the Marines’ new thinking on chaos and disorder and the *National Military Strategy: Shape, Respond, Prepare Now* to good effect in the Navy Department’s posture statements to Congress in 1998 and 1999.⁶⁷

E. CONCLUSION

In a rush to reap the benefits of peace by means of rapid demobilization and cost-cutting, the United States in the 1990s came to adapt a simple and compelling formula for how to wage war in a quick, efficient, and decisive manner by employing state-of-the-art American technology. As Colin Gray reflected, “The true parent of American thinking on national security is Jomini, not Clausewitz” (the Prussian military theorist Carl von Clausewitz, 1780–1831).⁶⁸ In the years that followed the end of the Cold War, the American defense establishment behaved much like it did after the end of the Second World War. Its focus was on how the military fought, not why. Strategy was made inferentially, as a derivative of technological progress and the salutary capabilities it promised.

The generic requirement to destroy targets with precise means relieved the military from the more difficult task of relating the results of such destruction to political goals, which were assumed to materialize at some point. The strategic bomber, the atomic bomb, and eventually the information-led Revolution in Military Affairs were compelling

⁶⁷ Edward J. Rhodes, “‘...From the Sea’ and Back Again: Naval Power in the Second American Century,” *Naval War College Review* 52, no. 2 (Spring 1999): 44–47. See “1998 Department of the Navy Posture Statement: Forward...From the Sea; Anytime, Anywhere” (Washington, DC: Department of the Navy, 1998) and “1999 Department of the Navy Posture Statement: America’s 21st Century Force; How We Live, How We Work, How We Fight” (Washington, DC: Department of the Navy, 1999).

⁶⁸ Colin S. Gray, *Explorations in Strategy* (Westport, CT: Greenwood, 1996), 90.

in part because, like Alfred Thayer Mahan's battleships, they conformed to American cultural assumptions and preferences, an unavoidable and necessary connection in a democracy like the United States, however sub-optimal its strategic implications may be in theoretical terms.

Nevertheless, it is hard to argue that the Navy Operational Concept was not suited to its moment. It emphasized the Navy's unique capabilities across the board, with particular emphasis on the value of forward deployment in relation to conventional deterrence and crisis response. These virtues would have been less in demand had not the Clinton administration's foreign policy been so broad, and focused on regional stability and democratization. In this sense, President Clinton's foreign policy was more accommodating toward naval interests than that of his predecessor or his successor. America's engagement with the world in the 1990s placed a premium on how the military was adapting to expeditionary missions across the spectrum, and this advantaged the Navy and the Marine Corps, which were already organized for such tasks and had experience in carrying them out.

Yet, justifying the Navy solely in relation to abstract notions of its operational uniqueness and its capacity for aiding the spread of democratic and free-market ideals was risky. Despite how the military was actually being used, such a course went against the grain of American post-Cold War thinking, which continued to see anything other than major war as a "lesser included case" for purposes of planning and budgeting. Throughout the 1990s, CNOs testified in front of Congress about the virtues of presence and how the Navy promoted stability. But Congress simply was not interested. It was not opposed to such missions, but could not fathom how they related to Congress's job of supplying the means of warfare. Not the least reason why all the U.S. military services continued to emphasize the procurement of advanced weapons systems long after it had become apparent that America's most likely adversaries did not possess them, was that those were the easiest things to sell to Congress.

It comes as no surprise, then, that the Navy's most innovative concepts of the post-Cold War era involved the application of technology to traditional operations. The

visionaries that emerged from the ranks of the Navy were well equipped to realize advancements in computer-based information and precision-strike munitions that were developed in the 1970s and 1980s. These admirals integrated the Navy within the new framework of joint operations by solving practical problems. They allowed the Navy to demonstrate its usefulness to the CINCs, specifically by showing that naval strike warfare was just as sophisticated as the Air Force's, and incorporated important advantages in the areas of speed, sustainability, and flexibility that made naval forces an attractive option.

To Navy leaders, the service's greatest challenge in the 1990s was thus not strategic in nature. They did not have to find a way out of a conceptual cul de sac, as had their predecessors in the late 1970s, a predicament that demanded a wholesale improvement of the quality of its strategic thinking, and which resulted in the apotheosis of the *Maritime Strategy*. While Navy leaders struggled initially to demonstrate the fleet's capabilities across the spectrum, their greatest challenge was to redress the political vulnerability that came with being operationally marginalized after the 1990–91 Gulf War. As Admiral Bill Owens noted in 1995, “The issue facing the nation's naval forces is not whether strategic-bombardment theory is absolutely correct; it is how best to contribute to successful strategic-bombardment campaigns.”⁶⁹

The Navy's leaders were able to overcome such problems in about six years, mainly by harnessing network-centric ideas and technologies and applying them to the problems of precision strike warfare waged from the sea—all of which did little to shift the institution's outlook away from the problems of warfighting on land, and toward a greater understanding of grand strategic requirements.

⁶⁹ Admiral William A. Owens, *High Seas: The Naval Passage to an Uncharted World* (Annapolis, MD: U.S. Naval Institute, 1995), 96.

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IX. THE NAVY STRATEGIC PLANNING GUIDANCE, 1998–2000

A. THE DILEMMAS OF CLINTON AND THE MILITARY

By the start of 1998, it was clear that while the Clinton administration's attempts to base a foreign policy on a single idea had been abandoned, one based on a flexible approach was faring no better.¹ American intelligence agencies identified no fewer than fifteen top priorities to ensure U.S. security, which essentially meant there were no priorities and nothing on which to create consensus about U.S. interests.² No bumper sticker had emerged to replace "enlargement" or "containment," making it difficult for the administration to find domestic support for its many diplomatic initiatives and military operations overseas. As Clinton had noted earlier, "You've still got to be able to crystallize complexity in a way people get right away. The operative problem of the moment is that a bunch of smart people haven't been able to come up with a new slogan, and saying that there aren't any good slogans isn't a slogan either."³ The multilateralism that emerged from the 1990–91 Gulf War coalition had worn away, particularly with respect to Iraq. International support for American-led actions declined. "The president had no overall strategy to guide his expenditure of time, energy, and resources," noted Hal Brands, "and the direction of policy ended up reflecting the president's personal inclinations rather than a systematic assessment of means and ends."⁴

The Clinton administration's inability to either increase the defense budget or reduce overseas operations was severely straining the military.⁵ It was stretched thin containing Iraq while deploying 25,000 troops in the Balkans. The Army had experienced

¹ Hal Brands, *From Berlin to Baghdad: America's Search for Purpose in the Post-Cold War World* (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 2008), 262.

² *Ibid.*, 202.

³ Strobe Talbott, *The Russia Hand: A Memoir of Presidential Diplomacy* (New York: Random House, 2002), 134.

⁴ Brands, *From Berlin to Baghdad*, 224.

⁵ See Bradley Graham and Eric Pianin, "Military Readiness, Morale Show Strain," *Washington Post*, August 13, 1998.

thirty overseas deployments since 1989, compared with ten over the previous four decades.⁶ As a result of the stagnant budgets and increased operations, morale and readiness plummeted.⁷ In a Navy with 370,000 active personnel, 18,000 operational billets were unfilled.⁸ While it did not profoundly change the status quo or upset the Services' budget apportionment, as some had feared, the 1997 QDR only exacerbated the problems.⁹ Given a limited budget, it had considered three options: 1) focus on current threats and ignore future ones; 2) focus on future threats at the expense of present threats; and 3) focus on realizing a Revolution in Military Affairs, which was the one that was selected despite the fact that those weapons systems would not be fielded for a decade or more. The choice almost inevitably short-changed parts, training, and retention bonuses.¹⁰

To some in and outside the Navy, the Navy's low readiness, morale, and retention were leading to a loss of confidence in its senior leaders.¹¹ To many, Secretary of the Navy John Dalton and CNO Jay Johnson had, as one reporter noted, "been too supportive of the administration's policies of curbing budgets and cutting units while committing forces to an increasing number of humanitarian and crisis-response missions."¹² The administration and Congress responded with a \$112 billion increase in the defense budget, the first since Clinton took office, although most of it would not be spent until after he left office.¹³

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ Otto Kreisher, "Pentagon Insider is Likely Choice for Navy Secretary," *San Diego Union-Tribune*, June 30, 1998.

⁸ Tom Philpott, "Full Speed Ahead," *Washingtonian* 34, no. 10 (July 1999): 91.

⁹ See George C. Wilson, *This War Really Matters: Inside the Fight for Defense Dollars* (Washington, DC: Congressional Quarterly, 2000), 39–42.

¹⁰ Frederick W. Kagan, *Finding the Target: The Transformation of American Military Policy* (New York: Encounter Books, 2006), 234.

¹¹ Kreisher, "Pentagon Insider is Likely Choice for Navy Secretary."

¹² Ibid.

¹³ Senate Armed Services Committee, *Department of Defense Authorizations for Fiscal Year 2000*, 203.

B. DANZIG ARRIVES

It was in this unpromising context that Richard Danzig was sworn in as secretary of the Navy in November 1998. Despite being in a lame-duck administration, Danzig became the most activist secretary since John Lehman, which invariably led to tensions with the CNO and the commandant of the Marine Corps. Danzig had a PhD in history from Oxford and a law degree from Yale, and had been a law professor at Stanford and Harvard. He had served as deputy assistant secretary of defense for Manpower, Reserve Affairs and Logistics in the Carter administration, and as the Navy's undersecretary from November 1993 to 1997. He had an intimidating intellect, even to the likes of Admiral Johnson and General Krulak. Like Lehman, Danzig was an energetic advocate of the Navy and sought to rebuild the service. Unlike Lehman, Danzig was not a divisive figure in Congress. He was one of the few Clinton appointees in the Pentagon that had the support of both parties, which, given a highly partisan Congress, was a requirement to push through his many initiatives. He quickly gained the reputation on Capitol Hill as an effective and innovative administrator, and as a figure brilliant enough to change what many saw as a hidebound and scandal-ridden service.

Secretary Danzig was well aware of the Navy's and Marine Corps's strong inbred institutional tendencies. He believed the military needed strong civilian leaders to keep it energized and continually "rethinking itself."¹⁴ In meetings with admirals in OPNAV, Danzig probed those tendencies and questioned what had traditionally been regarded as barely acknowledged assumptions and unassailable beliefs. In a meeting with the director of Surface Warfare, Rear Admiral Michael G. Mullen (CNO, 2005–07 and chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, 2007–11), for example, Danzig dissected Mullen's brief, which, among others, tried to explain the need for American sea power:

You begin by saying we're a maritime nation and then reason logically down through "Forward...From the Sea." My problem with it is I'm not sure how evocative it is for most people to call us a maritime nation when

¹⁴ Philpott, "Full Speed Ahead," 92.

we're 800 billion other things. A cybernation, a financial nation, and so on. It doesn't make the case for sea power for me to begin with that true-but-not-evocative proposition. And then you continue on to say that "Forward presence is our job one." But what you're citing for this is the CNO's comments, and so it's self-referencing. If it's designed for an external audience, it doesn't persuade me that forward presence is all that important just 'cause, to us, it seems important. And then you say, "We need to be there. It's not a virtual need." My point is it's an assertion. What's wrong with virtual presence? Indeed, in the submarine context, we argue that if there's a feeling we may be present, that's enough. So why do you need to be present?¹⁵

Danzig noted that perhaps the real value of forward presence is not to deter conflict, but to make states like China and Japan believe that they do not have to resort to a competitive arms race.¹⁶ These were not the kinds of questions that admirals were used to hearing from a Navy secretary or anyone else of consequence.

To many in the service, Danzig was rethinking the Navy too much, trying to accomplish too much in his two years in office.¹⁷ As CNO Johnson noted, "With an organization this big, and with as many moving parts as it has, change can be very useful. But you have to be very careful how you put it into the system....Putting five degrees of rudder on this machine takes a long time."¹⁸ There was an ever-present anxiety in OPNAV that Danzig would do something "radical."¹⁹ Unlike his predecessor John Dalton, who simply signed documents like *Forward...From the Sea* that were put in front of him, Danzig had the intellectual firepower and political backing to develop a new strategic approach by himself, whose direction seemed impossible to anticipate. Some feared that he would abandon the Navy's commitment to forward deployment, others that he would elevate the Marines' comparative stature because, as undersecretary, he had

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ Ibid. For more on Richard Danzig's thinking, see Richard J. Danzig, *The Big Three: Our Greatest Security Risks and How to Address Them* (Washington, DC: National Defense University, 1999).

¹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹ Ibid.

shifted \$600 million from the Navy to the Marines' side of the budget.²⁰ With only two years in office, there was little guarantee that Danzig would be around to put the genie back in the bottle if his approach went south.

C. A MARITIME STRATEGY FOR THE 21ST CENTURY

When Secretary Danzig arrived, the Strategy and Concepts branch (N513) was already at work on a strategic concept called "4 x 4" under the direction of Vice Admiral James O. Ellis, deputy CNO for Operations, Plans and Policies (N3/N5). A few ideas from the concept, so-named because it had four strategic concepts and four tactical concepts, found their way into the 1999 Navy Department congressional posture statement. But when Vice Admiral Thomas B. Fargo replaced Ellis in the fall of 1998, the concept was shelved, and a new one was to be developed by Captain Sam J. Tangredi, under the leadership of Rear Admiral Joe Sestak, head of the Strategy, Plans, and Policy Division (N51).

By June 1999, "A Maritime Strategy for the 21st Century," as Sestak's concept was titled, was expected to be signed by the Navy secretary, CNO, and commandant within months.²¹ According to some, A Maritime Strategy was a top priority of Danzig, who wanted a new strategic statement in place before the Services began organizing for the 2001 QDR.²² A Maritime Strategy represented a significant advancement in how the Navy related its purpose to forward presence, regional stability, and the health of the American and global economy. As it noted, A Maritime Strategy was a logical continuation of ...*From the Sea* and *Forward...From the Sea*.²³ Yet it offered a more expansive explanation of American sea power.

²⁰ Ibid., 94.

²¹ Roman Schweizer, "Navy Hopes to Deliver New 'Maritime Strategy' This Summer," *Inside the Navy*, June 21, 1999.

²² Ibid.

²³ "A Maritime Strategy for the 21st Century" (unpublished; photocopy, Office of the Chief of Naval Operations White Paper; draft date: November 1999), 3.

The fourteen-page document noted that two factors made it feasible and necessary for the naval services to continue focusing on influencing events ashore—the continuing absence of a global adversary and the “inexorable” process of globalization.²⁴ A Maritime Strategy held that aggressors would avoid a conventional war with the United States and its large and advanced army and air forces, and resort to asymmetric means such as terrorism, nuclear-biological-chemical threats, information warfare, or environmental sabotage. In which case, it argued, forward deployed naval forces would be comparatively more relevant than other military assets because their capabilities in deterring and responding to conventional and asymmetric attacks were broader and more responsive than U.S.-based Army and Air Force units.

The document stated that globalization, which it defined as “the accelerating process of economic, technological, cultural, and political integration throughout the world,” meant the United States would increasingly be affected by events overseas:²⁵

Global economic interdependence has implied an expanding network of interests and trade that constitute a vital element of U.S. national strength. However, this factor also portends a set of interlocking dependencies that make a global economy like the United States vulnerable to crisis and conflict overseas....Thus, economic interdependence has reinforced the longstanding, traditional role of U.S. naval forces to ensure high seas mobility and access to resources and markets, in peacetime as well as war.²⁶

Forward presence, conventional deterrence, and regional crisis management were thus no longer merely operational concepts, points on a “spectrum of conflict,” but were directly linked, for the first time, to the health of the American and global economy.

A Maritime Strategy was organized around ends, means, and ways, a paradigm familiar to strategists. The “ends”—which were said to be regional stability, deterrence of aggression, provision of timely initial crisis response, and the readiness to fight and win

²⁴ Paragraph based on “A Maritime Strategy for the 21st Century,” 4–5.

²⁵ Ibid., 5.

²⁶ Ibid.

wars—were hardly revolutionary in systemic terms, and kept with the general operational focus.²⁷ The “means” were forward presence and, somewhat unusually, “knowledge superiority.” Informational technologies, it was argued, increased the importance of forward deployment.²⁸ As one Navy official noted of the document, “By day-to-day presence in theater, we are able to build and enhance a knowledge base. It permits us to be the perfect instrument for shaping a region.”²⁹ The document asserted that forward-deployed naval forces assured joint and allied/coalition forces “an unprecedented awareness and understanding of the battlespace.”³⁰ “Knowledge superiority,” in turn, “places a priority on sensors over weapons and network over platform,” which means the enemy’s anti-access strategies and weapons could not frustrate U.S. actions.³¹ Decision-makers will therefore have “preemptive knowledge superiority,” which was defined as the understanding by allies, friends, and adversaries that U.S. forces possess the battlespace knowledge and “credible combat capabilities” to deter aggression.³²

The “ways” were Battlespace Control, Battlespace Attack, and Battlespace Sustainment.³³ Battlespace Control meant the ability to project not only offensive power, but also defensive control over the battlespace, including theater ballistic and cruise missile and air defense, and layered under-sea defenses against submarines and mines. Battlespace Control marked the continued emphasis on local sea control, and the need for a submarine like the *Virginia*-class attack submarine, which the Navy was attempting to secure from Congress to replace the *Los Angeles*-class. It was designed to operate not only in the open ocean but also in the littorals against boats such as the much quieter

²⁷ Ibid., 12.

²⁸ See “A Maritime Strategy for the 21st Century,” 5–8.

²⁹ Robert Holzer, “U.S. Navy Envisions Broad Influence Over Land Combat,” *Defense News*, June 21, 1999.

³⁰ “A Maritime Strategy for the 21st Century,” 7.

³¹ Ibid.

³² Ibid., 6.

³³ See “A Maritime Strategy for the 21st Century,” 8–12.

Russian-made diesel *Kilo*-class submarine that Iran possessed. Battlespace Attack was the use of massed precision naval fires or the insertion of Marines to neutralize the enemy's anti-access weapons and command networks and attack its warfighting capability either as a stand-alone force or as part of a joint team. Battlespace Sustainment was the ability to provide a mobile and tailored sea-based logistics system that can support widely dispersed, fast-moving, and networked naval maneuver operations across the physical battlespace, as envisioned in the Marines' *Operational Maneuver from the Sea*.

A Maritime Strategy asserted that the expansion of the battlespace in physical and informational terms demanded a conceptual reconsideration of the boundaries of naval control, attack, and sustainment. "Thus, while sea and area control remains a unique naval contribution to Joint warfighting, it is no longer sufficient to think only in terms of sea or area control of a physical battlespace."³⁴ It noted that in the nineteenth century, the limits of naval battlespace were determined by the limited range of guns ashore and on ships. It was accordingly taken for granted that the effects of naval strategy on events on land were primarily *indirect*. Now those limits would be determined by the dispersion of naval forces and by the reach of their sensors as well as their weapons. Now, having achieved command of the seas,

The Navy and Marine Corps... [can] turn their attention to the ultimate objective of *maritime* strategy that will be a critical element of America's national security and military strategies in the decades to come: *to influence directly and decisively events ashore by continuing to operate in forward regions and to take full advantage of revolutionary capabilities of information systems for knowledge-superiority operations*.³⁵

Because technology had expanded the physical and cyber battlespace, the reach of naval forces was now far greater and their actions more decisive than had been asserted even in recent statements like ...*From the Sea* and *Forward...From the Sea*. In this respect, A

³⁴ Ibid., 9.

³⁵ Ibid., 3. Emphasis in the original.

Maritime Strategy elaborated upon Vice Admiral Art Cebrowski's thinking and, to a lesser extent, Commander Joe Bouchard's discussions of maneuver warfare.

Nevertheless, naval experts questioned A Maritime Strategy.³⁶ Many of them saw nothing fundamentally new or different about it. "As a statement of where the Navy is going for the future, I think there needs to be something more in here," noted Ronald O'Rourke.³⁷ He was implying that the paper simply did not provide a strong enough rationale for the Navy's preferred force structure. At least in Washington, the use of the term "strategy" in the title of a strategic statement means it is not just a future-oriented "vision" or "concept" or a "white paper," the last of which introduces a new idea. Instead, it means the statement squarely addresses means-ways-ends thinking in terms of a *particular* force structure, which O'Rourke believed was wanting in this case. Indeed it was—A Maritime Strategy did not provide a rationale for the fleet's structure, only assertions that it was to be forward deployed and plugged into a network.

Reportedly, the Marines also balked at endorsing A Maritime Strategy.³⁸ The Marines had always been quick to assert the relationship between naval forces, diplomacy, and crisis response. But, as in the case of *Forward...From the Sea*, global thinking on the part of the Navy did not enthrall the Marines. They wanted the focus on warfighting and expeditionary operations, the core of the Marines' distinctive institutional ethos. As General Krulak noted, "Our identity is tied to that ethos. There are unintended consequences [to changing it]. You think in the short term you're achieving a certain goal, but in reality, the unintended consequence is something bad for the Navy or the Marine Corps."³⁹

³⁶ Holzer, "U.S. Navy Envisions Broad Influence."

³⁷ Ibid.

³⁸ Captain Peter M. Swartz, U.S. Navy (Ret.), discussion with the author, November 20, 2009, Alexandria, VA. (In researching his U.S. Navy Capstone Strategies series, Swartz had discussions with several officers who had worked on A Maritime Strategy.)

³⁹ Philpott, "Full Speed Ahead," 94.

In the end, A Maritime Strategy was not released. The reasons are murky.⁴⁰ There is some evidence that Sestak did not want the Marine Corps to review it, so that when the Marines obtained a copy the project was quietly killed near the end of 1999. Other sources indicate that the document went through several Navy-Marine Corps revisions before being signed by Johnson and Krulak. But when Danzig wanted to rewrite it himself and sign it out, the two chiefs balked and rescinded it, and agreed not to send another one to Danzig. Despite the pushing by one of the most aggressive of the Navy post-war strategists (Sestak) and the pulling by the most activist of Navy secretaries (Danzig), “A Maritime Strategy for the 21st Century” was not published.

D. SESTAK’S GOALS

At the start of 2000, then, Rear Admiral Sestak lacked a vehicle to promote the ideas in “A Maritime Strategy for the 21st Century” by way of guiding OPNAV’s preparations for the 2001 QDR, which were far more organized than its efforts for the 1997 QDR. In 1997, the Navy had essentially argued that it saw no reason to remake itself and tell a new story every four years. The Navy was fortunate the 1997 QDR had been supportive of the naval contribution to American security. Navy leaders like Sestak learned that in a town that is constantly demanding change and where only new ideas can be assured a hearing, the Navy’s stories need to change as they have shelf lives.

As would be the case with all subsequent QDRs, preparing for the 2001 QDR was a highly organized, high priority all-hands effort in OPNAV. Preparing meant assessing the near and long-term strategic, political, technological, and fiscal environments, including the priorities of the presidential candidates. It meant advancing concepts that explained the Navy’s purpose, comparative importance, and programmatic priorities in what would be an open battle with the other services. Most importantly, it meant preparing a vast number of studies and analyses about the capabilities and requirements of the Navy’s programs for the QDR team.

⁴⁰ Paragraph based on Swartz, discussion with the author, November 20, 2009.

As leader of the QDR effort, Sestak saw an opportunity to institutionalize a new decision-making process in OPNAV. He wanted strategy to shape programmatic decisions instead of the other way around. The Navy did not have a sequential strategic process, by which declaratory strategy determined the acquisition strategy, which in turn determined how weapons systems would be employed in the fleet.⁴¹ In reality, these were separate processes that ran in parallel, so that declaratory strategy had little causal impact upon programmatic decisions. Declaratory strategy was simply the medium by which senior Navy leaders articulated the service's purpose to convince American leaders and society of the Navy's institutional necessity and the validity of its budgetary claims.

Rear Admiral Sestak wanted a comprehensive strategic planning process to be an integral part of OPNAV's programming and budgeting process. From his perspective programmatic decisions were being made in a strategic vacuum: "PPBS" (the Planning, Programming, and Budgetary System) was really "pPBS." In essence, there was no strategic planning going on in OPNAV, only strategic programming. OPNAV's decision-making process was based on formal analysis intended to determine if the fleet had the capabilities to meet the operational and particularly warfighting needs of the CINCs and, in particular, their campaign plans. Real strategic planning, in contrast, meant examining the long-term trends in the political, technological, and fiscal environments, and issuing guidance to shape resource decisions in accordance with those assessments. It also meant establishing milestones and feedback mechanisms to ensure these decisions were in accordance with core Navy strategy documents.

Two years earlier, Commander Joe Bouchard had tried unsuccessfully to establish such a process. It was to be an iterative process, one based on a two-year cycle that was synchronized with the OSD's budget process, which, in turn, was synchronized with

⁴¹ See Peter M. Swartz with Karin Duggan, "U.S. Navy Capstone Strategies and Concepts: Introduction, Background and Analyses," PowerPoint brief in PDF (Alexandria, VA: Center for Naval Analyses, December 2011), 46, slide 91, <http://www.cna.org/research/2011/us-navy-capstone-strategies-concepts-introduction>.

Congress's two-year budget cycle.⁴² The process was to use a strategic planning guide that was the product of an internal assessment. This assessment would examine the near- and long-term political, technological, and fiscal environments and then assess the gamut of the Navy's Title 10 responsibilities in relation to them. The resulting analysis would be the single source to organize and guide the decisions of OPNAV, the fleet, and the rest of the Navy in much the same way the *Maritime Strategy* had aligned the Navy's activities in the 1980s. Bouchard pitched the idea to OPNAV's senior admirals. But the three-star deputy CNOs did not see a need for it, in part because it appeared to grant N3/N5 more authority over a process that had heretofore been dominated by Resources, Warfare Requirements, and Assessments (N8), Manpower and Personnel (N1), and (more recently) Space and Electronic Warfare (N6).

The community warfare barons did not think much of Bouchard's proposal either. The interactive, consensus-building process institutionalized by CNO Frank Kelso and Vice Admiral Bill Owens had broken down. It needed a personality like Owens to run it and bring consensus and a sense of teamwork among the ten or so junior admirals involved.⁴³ Absent such compelling leadership, the barons enjoyed a measure of freedom and did not want to be constrained by an authoritative top-down document. The only part of OPNAV that was receptive to Bouchard's proposal was the Assessment Division (N81). Because of its expert analysis role, N81 had become even more important. As Peter Swartz noted, N81 overshadowed the "collective role of [the] flags."⁴⁴ Like Naval Warfare (OP-07) before it, N81 was becoming the integrator of requirements and the arbitrator of priorities within OPNAV. Consequently it would have the lead, along with N5, in drafting the strategic planning guide.

⁴² Paragraph based on Captain Joseph F. Bouchard, U.S. Navy (Ret.), email message to Peter M. Swartz, April 8, 2005.

⁴³ Peter M. Swartz with Michael C. Markowitz, "Organizing OPNAV (1970–2009)," PowerPoint in PDF (Alexandria, VA: Center for Naval Analyses, January 2010), 60, <http://www.cna.org/research/2010/organizing-opnav-1970-2009>.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 59.

In August 1999, two years after Bouchard transferred out, OPNAV released something like what he had proposed. It was called the “Navy Strategic Planning Guidance: Long Range Planning Objectives,” and its basic intent was to provide overarching guidance to aid OPNAV in putting together the Navy’s program memorandum for fiscal year 2002. The fifty-five-page document was classified due to the intelligence section, which addressed the strategic environment. Sestak might have thought the document was hollow, lacking as it did sufficient substance to link strategy and resources. Still, it was an ideal vehicle to accomplish his goals. It could promote the ideas from “A Maritime Strategy for the 21st Century” without the need for Secretary Danzig’s signature. It could organize OPNAV’s efforts to prepare for the QDR, and, for the first time in the post-Cold War era, it could help institutionalize a strategy-based approach in OPNAV.

E. THE NAVY STRATEGIC PLANNING GUIDANCE

Admiral Johnson signed out Rear Admiral Sestak’s Navy Strategic Planning Guidance in April 2000.⁴⁵ The ninety-page unclassified document had four sections. The first was a description of the strategic environment. Like “A Maritime Strategy for the 21st Century,” it addressed globalization and the rise of regional actors and their anti-access weapons and area-denial strategies. Two summaries prepared by the Office of Naval Intelligence were included. One entitled *Potential Adversary Capabilities* addressed trends in theater ballistic missiles, submarines, anti-ship cruise missiles, mines, and surface ships. The other was *Probable Other Areas of Concern*, which discussed asymmetric warfare as waged by state and non-state actors, including terrorist attacks on the homeland and information operations against military networks. The document noted

⁴⁵ The drafts of the Navy Strategic Planning Guidance were written and the process managed by Commander Craig S. Faller and Lieutenant Chris Cavanaugh, who were at the center of many such efforts during Rear Admiral Sestak’s tenure.

that “Our potential adversaries will continue to pursue area denial strategies over the next 15 to 20 years. These challenges will primarily be land-based and in the near-coastal regions.”⁴⁶ It also noted that

The Navy assumes that no peer competitor on a global scale will arise prior to 2020....We must continue to be prepared to fight and win at the high end of military conflict, while maintaining a clear focus on the day to day shaping responsibility through the forward presence and engagement activities....The Navy must maintain the capability to dominate the maritime environment to dissuade global naval ambitions by a future regional power, while also retaining the capacity to handle operations at the lower end of the spectrum of conflict.⁴⁷

In other words, the Navy was, in essence, agreeing with Bill Manthorpe that the next global threat would not appear for twenty years. Under such conditions, the point of a fleet built for “high end” conflict was chiefly to deter regional powers from attempting to turn into “peer competitors,” a role in which China was already being cast.

The second section, termed “The Maritime Concept,” was a recapitulation of “A Maritime Strategy for the 21st Century.” It declared the Navy’s purpose to be “Maritime Power Projection”—“the paramount objective of the Navy and Marine Corps will remain the global projection of American power and influence—*anytime, anywhere*.”⁴⁸ It used the chart in Figure 3 to explain the means, ends, and ways of how this was to be accomplished—the same construct used in “A Maritime Strategy for the 21st Century.” It noted that two complementary capstone operational concepts would guide the Navy. The first, *Naval Operations in the Information Age*, outlined how the Navy would transition from platform-centric to network-centric warfare. The second, *Operational Maneuver from the Sea*, dealt with the conduct of naval operations in the littoral. Also discussed was the need to protect the twenty large “hub” ports of the world against conventional

⁴⁶ “Navy Strategic Planning Guidance; With Long Range Planning Objectives” (Washington, DC: Office of the Chief of Naval Operations, April 2000), 5.

⁴⁷ Ibid., 3.

⁴⁸ Ibid., 42. Emphasis in the original.

and asymmetric attacks, and how the Navy should work with civil authorities in response to terrorist attacks and natural disasters at home.

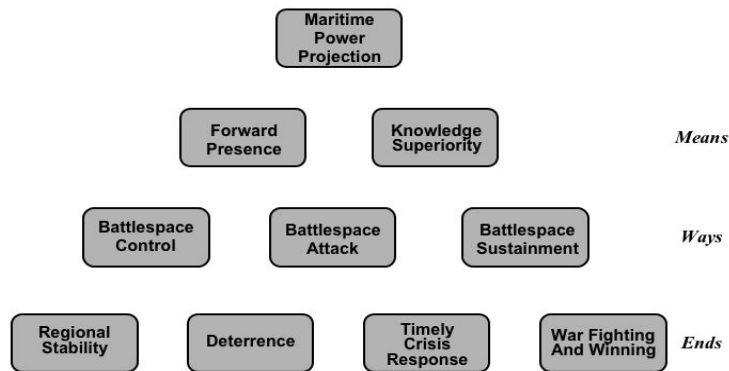


Figure 3. The Naval Strategic Planning Guidance Construct⁴⁹

The third section explained the process that Sestak wished to institutionalize.⁵⁰ The process had four phases: 1) develop and continuously refine a strategic concept; 2) operationalize the concept into warfighting concepts and capabilities; 3) establish a set of prioritized strategic planning objectives to realize the operational concepts; and 4) assess how those capability requirements would be translated into program recommendations. The section also took pains to explain the new program planning process that was installed the previous year, which had replaced Admiral Owens's old Joint Mission Area assessment system. It was called the Integrated Warfare Architectures assessment process, which was established by Admiral Archie Clemens. No longer was resource planning based on how the Navy could contribute to the seven joint mission areas of Joint Strike, Joint Littoral Warfare, Joint Surveillance, Joint Space and

⁴⁹ Ibid., 24.

⁵⁰ Ibid., 29–38.

Electronic Warfare/Intelligence, Strategic Deterrence, Strategic Sealift/Protection, and Presence. Now, it was based on what *capabilities* were required. Moreover, as it noted, the “primary focus is on warfighting *capabilities* as opposed to the traditional focus on platforms and systems.”⁵¹

Finally, the Assessment Division (N81) led a process that was divided into five Warfare and seven Support assessment teams. These teams were responsible for integrating their analyses to ensure that there were no mismatches between Navy capability requirements, which were shaped by the needs of the CINCs and naval operational commanders, and Navy weapons systems programs. The five Warfare areas were: 1) Information Superiority and Sensors; 2) Sea Dominance; 3) Air Dominance; 4) Power Projection; and 5) Deterrence. The seven Support areas were: 1) Sustainment; 2) Infrastructure; 3) Manpower and Personnel; 4) Readiness; 5) Training/Education; 6) Technology; and 7) Force Structure.⁵²

The third section also addressed OPNAV’s QDR preparations. It organized the research teams and provided a phased milestone roadmap that included roundtable discussions, wargames, and workshops. The section noted that while the 1997 QDR supported the Navy, and that its force of 305 ships was sufficient to meet contemporary requirements, that kind of fleet would not be able to meet the challenges of the future. The section identified the three themes or “talking points” for the QDR:

The Navy’s *enduring contribution* is combat-credible forward presence, providing our Nation with the means for both continuous shaping and timely crisis response. The other Services are transforming to become *expeditionary*—which we already are.

The Navy’s *transformation* is into a knowledge-superior force, enabling it to dictate the operational tempo across sea, air, land, space, and cyberspace—an *expanded battlespace*.

⁵¹ Ibid., 31. Emphasis in the original.

⁵² Ibid., 32–36.

Technology is driving [the] Navy into *new mission areas*—such as theater ballistic missile defense and deep land attack—and these, in turn, drive requirements for both new capabilities and additional capacity.⁵³

With its new capabilities-based approach, the Navy was arguing that technology was increasing both the number of required capacities (i.e., numbers) and capabilities.

Finally, the fourth section contained the Long Range Planning Objectives, the core of the document. It sought to establish concept-based priorities. “We must look at every program, platform, organization, concept, and technology to systematically judge whether it supports the maritime concept and provides positive progress along the path toward a Navy that is fully ‘knowledge-centric,’ present forward and combat-credible.”⁵⁴ The section addressed each of the six boxes in Figure 3 in terms of associated operational concepts derived from the Maritime Concept. It prioritized the capabilities needed to realize the concepts. It had five priority settings for “Those capabilities that directly support or enhance the enduring core naval competencies without which *severe* strategic risk would be incurred.”⁵⁵

Overall, thirty-five capabilities were “severe.” The top ten were: 1) recruiting; 2) retaining personnel; 3) measuring readiness; 4) maintaining and deploying carrier and amphibious battle groups; 5) maintaining survivability as a design characteristic of all future platforms (i.e., ships designed for combat, not thin-skinned patrol ships that lacked firepower); 6) directing naval, joint, and combined task force operations afloat; 7) linking shooters, sensors, and command nodes; 8) establishing a common data link system for the fleet; 9) producing a single integrated air picture that fused sensor and intelligence inputs; and 10) conducting covert surveillance in the littoral battle space (one of the main post-Cold War missions of the Navy’s fast attack submarines).⁵⁶

⁵³ Ibid., 36–37. Emphasis in the original.

⁵⁴ Ibid., 40.

⁵⁵ Ibid. Emphasis in the original.

⁵⁶ Ibid., 79.

In the end, however, the Navy Strategic Planning Guidance never had a chance to influence anything. Sestak had found a vehicle to carry his ideas, but it had not been marketed for a wider audience as *Forward...From the Sea* had been; nor could it have been, since that would have required Danzig's signature or at least support. Most of the senior officers that had developed and supported it detached shortly after its release. Vice Admiral Robert J. Natter, who had replaced Fargo as N3/N5, transferred in June 2000. CNO Johnson retired in July, four months after signing the Navy Strategic Planning Guidance.

Sestak himself transferred in October to the newly created QDR division in N8. Despite his occupying this seemingly key post, his ideas did not influence programmatic decisions, in part, perhaps, because they were perceived as too closely tied to his personal initiatives.⁵⁷ The new leaders were either unsure of Sestak's ideas, not having been a part of their development, or had entirely different ideas. As with many of the Navy's strategic statements, the Navy Strategic Planning Guidance was hamstrung by the lack of a long-term follow-up plan, which might tread upon the command prerogatives of the next CNO, whose appointment, in the nature of things, was never more than a few years away.⁵⁸ Yet, as with many statements that were institutionally abandoned or marginalized, its ideas percolated through the bureaucracy and the ranks of the Navy's strategists, and, to a lesser extent, the Navy's leaders, and would eventually emerge in a more crystallized form in the next set of strategic statements.⁵⁹

⁵⁷ Peter M. Swartz with Karin Duggan, "U.S. Navy Capstone Strategies and Concepts (1991–2000): Strategy, Policy, Concept, and Vision Documents," PowerPoint brief in PDF (Alexandria, VA: Center for Naval Analyses, March 2012), 149, slide 297, <http://www.cna.org/research/2012/us-navy-capstone-strategies-concepts-1991-2000>.

⁵⁸ Ibid.

⁵⁹ The desire of Commander Bouchard and Rear Admiral Sestak for a comprehensive strategic planning process to inform OPNAV's programming and budgeting process was realized with the release of the Navy Strategic Plan in 2006 by CNO Mike Mullen.

F. CLARK BECOMES THE NAVY'S CEO

In July 2000, Admiral Vernon E. Clark (2000–05) took the reins from CNO Jay Johnson, who had led the Navy during the traumatic years that followed the Tailhook and Naval Academy scandals and secured the F/A-18 E/F Super Hornet. Clark would serve five years in office, the second longest tenure after that of Arleigh Burke. Clark was a surface officer. He had entered the Navy in 1968, and was neither a graduate of the Naval Academy nor the Naval War College. Instead, he was the first CNO with a master's degree in business administration. He had served three tours in OPNAV, twice in program planning, but never as a flag officer. His first flag assignment had been with the U.S. Transportation Command, a functional CINC, where he was the head of the Plans and Policy directorate (J5) and later the Financial Management and Analysis directorate (J8). During the 1990–91 Gulf War, he had been the director of Operations (J3) on the Joint Staff, and later became the director of the Joint Staff, the most important and powerful three-star position in the military.

The choice of Clark as CNO reflected the prevailing trend within the Department of Defense toward jointness and corporateness. To Clark's way of thinking, the Navy had no business advancing a strategy of any kind. That responsibility lay with OSD and the Joint Staff, whose decisions were beyond reproach. A service-specific strategy was thought to be inherently self-serving, and went against the grain of jointness, and the infallibility of OSD and the Joint Staff. Having served as the Joint Staff's J3 and director, Clark was comfortable with how the process of strategy formulation worked, and was confident that those in OSD and the Joint Staff would make the right calls. Moreover, he was confident of his ability to redress such problems if not.⁶⁰ To Clark, the Navy's "strategy" was its budget submission, and, like Johnson, he was skeptical of any kind of

⁶⁰ Captain Peter M. Swartz, U.S. Navy (Ret.), discussion with the author, February 18, 2010, Arlington, VA. (Swartz was the Center for Naval Analyses' support analyst for N51 for much of the post-Cold War period.)

glossy strategic statement.⁶¹ “I didn’t come into the job with the idea of publishing another ‘vision’ document,” Clark noted.⁶² All of this helps explain why the remaining elements of the Navy’s strategy community, which had been slowly dismantled either by omission or commission on the part of CNOs Kelso, Boorda, and Johnson—none of who saw the value of such a community—were almost fully disassembled under Clark.

From Clark’s perspective, the CNO was the chief executive officer of a service-oriented industrial corporation whose purpose was to provide his “customers,” as Clark phrased it, who were the secretary of defense and the CINCs, with the right capabilities at a low cost. As Clark noted, “We must extract the maximum advantage from the resources provided us and demand a high rate of return on our investments.”⁶³ Clark often cited his joint and business experiences as influencing his decisions.⁶⁴ As Pentagon spokesman Kenneth Bacon noted, Secretary of Defense William S. Cohen selected Clark because “he had displayed a commitment to operating in an integrated way with other services,” and could “bring innovative solutions” to the Navy’s problems and looked to building the Navy for the next century.⁶⁵

In his first two years, Clark focused on his top five priorities: 1) manpower; 2) current readiness; 3) future readiness; 4) quality of service; and 5) organizational alignment.⁶⁶ “Alignment” was Clark’s word for reorganization, which he pursued with determination. To consolidate the fleet’s readiness requirements and assessments in one

⁶¹ Peter M. Swartz with Karin Duggan, “U.S. Navy Capstone Strategies and Concepts (2001–2010): Strategy, Policy, Concept, and Vision Documents,” PowerPoint brief in PDF (Alexandria, VA: Center for Naval Analyses, December 2011), 4, slide 7, <http://www.cna.org/research/2011/us-navy-capstone-strategies-concepts-2001-2010>.

⁶² Scott C. Truver, “The U.S. Navy in Review,” U.S. Naval Institute *Proceedings* 129, no. 5 (May 2003): 88.

⁶³ Chief of Naval Operations Admiral Vernon E. Clark, forward to “Vision...Presence...Power: A Program Guide to the U.S. Navy, 2002 Edition” (Washington, DC: Office of the Chief of Naval Operations, 2003), <http://www.Navy.mil/Navydata/policy/vision/vis02/contents.html>.

⁶⁴ Swartz, “Organizing OPNAV (1970–2009),” 71.

⁶⁵ Jack Dorsey, “Norfolk-Based Admiral Tapped for Top Navy Post,” *The (Norfolk, VA) Virginian-Pilot*, March 1, 2000.

⁶⁶ Truver, “The U.S. Navy in Review,” 88.

office, Clark moved the responsibilities for fleet readiness from Plans, Policies, and Operations (N3/N5) to Logistics (N4), now titled Fleet Readiness and Logistics, which created a powerful advocate for fleet readiness.

More importantly, Clark reestablished Warfare Requirements and Programs (N7), which CNO Frank Kelso had abolished earlier in the decade after transferring its responsibilities to N8, which, since then, had grown too powerful in the interim. Clark, like CNO Carlisle Trost, saw merit in establishing a competitive and structurally balanced environment in OPNAV, which now was comprised of the “honest brokers” of N8, the current readiness advocates of N4, and the future requirements experts in N7.⁶⁷ In October 2000, Clark transferred responsibility for the QDR preparation from N3/N5 by forming the QDR division in N8. In 2001, he elevated the billet of the director of the Navy Staff (i.e., OPNAV) from a one-star to a three-star position to match the Joint Staff’s. This was just the start. Over the next five years, his reorganizational changes were “numerous, continuous, and affected almost every office in OPNAV,” Peter Swartz noted. “Taken as a whole, they changed OPNAV almost as much as the revolutionary changes of Admirals Zumwalt and Kelso.”⁶⁸

G. CONCLUSION

For his part, President Clinton never was able to develop a convincing strategic framework for the post-Cold War era. He expanded the bounds of U.S. foreign and economic policy and broadened the government’s focus beyond traditional threats. He raised economic policy on par with foreign policy. He focused on global trade agreements, currency stabilization, and addressing financial crisis such as the one in East Asia in the summer of 1997, whose devastating effects radiated through the U.S. economy and caused a global economic crises that he labeled as the worse in half a

⁶⁷ Swartz, “Organizing OPNAV (1970–2009),” 85.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, 73.

century.⁶⁹ Despite his lack of strategic imagination and a society that was largely indifferent to the United States' preeminent role as manager of the international system, in all these respects, Clinton created conditions in which it became reasonable to raise the question how military force could be configured and employed to expand free-markets and democracies, and be used to advance and protect the international system. But he was unable to supply a firm and consistent answer.

Characteristically, neither Congress nor the Pentagon was much help. They were consumed with solving second- and third-order problems, which centered on determining the right weapons given a reduced allowance. As Robert J. Art noted, Congress for the most part examines "the details of defense spending, but rarely [looks] at the big picture."⁷⁰ The American officials that dealt most directly with applying military power in the service of Clinton's economic and political goals did not have backgrounds in international finance, banking, and law. These were the regional CINCs, who exercised more power in their respective regions and received more attention by foreign governments than did U.S. diplomats, much to the annoyance of those in the State Department. If the American empire had viceroys and proconsuls, they were the regional CINCs. The outlooks of the regional CINCs and their staffs had been shaped by decades of preparing for war with the Soviets. Like the rest of the military, such experiences did little to prepare them to understand how to relate progressive liberal policies to American military power to serve an American-built international system that privileged American interests.

By the end of the decade it was clear throughout the Department of Defense that the military could not afford both the high pace of overseas operations and the advanced

⁶⁹ Derek H. Chollet and James M. Goldgeier, *America between the Wars, 11/9 to 9/11: The Misunderstood Years between the Fall of the Berlin Wall and the Start of the War on Terror* (New York: BBS Public Affairs, 2008), 249.

⁷⁰ Robert J. Art, "Congress and the Defense Budget: Enhancing Policy Oversight," in Robert J. Art, Vincent Davis, and Samuel P. Huntington, *Reorganizing America's Defense: Leadership in War and Peace* (Washington, DC: Pergamon-Brassey's, 1985), 405, quoted in James J. Tritten and Paul Stockton, *Reconstituting America's Defense: The New U.S. National Security Strategy* (New York: Praeger, 1992), 70.

weapons systems required to bring about the Revolution in Military Affairs.⁷¹ Something would have to give. On one hand, the prospect that the fiscal climate would get worse drove the Services to fund the top of their (traditionally conceived) wish lists. On the other, the Services were obliged to compete for new missions and demonstrate their capacity to address new threats or risk either a reduction in their respective budget share or the defense budget as a whole. As a result, readiness suffered.

To make up shortfalls, U.S. military leaders, none more so those in the Navy, attempted a Revolution in Business Affairs by applying production techniques and management practices from the business world. The Navy's admirals enthusiastically embraced these corporate practices. Like CNOs Frank Kelso and Vern Clark, these admirals were prepared to regard good management as a placeholder for good strategy. Congress encouraged such an outlook by allowing the Services to plough back into weapons systems funds that came from realizing cost efficiencies. These were found, for example, by modernizing the management of "human capital," optimizing the time in which parts were repaired, buying commercial off-the-shelf technology, cutting manning in sea and shore commands, reducing training flight hours and time at sea. The commanding officers of all operational units received extensive training on how to find cost-efficiencies, and their efforts in this regard inevitably filled their fitness reports.⁷² Increasingly, to Navy leaders, the service's most pressing problem was not how to rationalize itself, but how to afford itself.

Yet, the fleet's composition was not going to change appreciably over the next decade. New platforms like the highly advanced Joint Strike Fighter and the DD(X) land-attack destroyer would not be fielded anytime soon.⁷³ Consequently, as Danzig and Clark agreed, the Navy needed to pursue revolutionary technologies and network-centric

⁷¹ Thomas P. M. Barnett, *The Pentagon's New Map: War and Peace in the Twenty-First Century* (New York: G.P. Putnam's Sons, 2004), 103.

⁷² Author's experience as a commanding officer of a carrier-based squadron (Carrier Airborne Early Warning Squadron One One Two [VAW-112]) from August 2004 to January 2006.

⁷³ "DD" is the Navy's hull classification for destroyers.

warfare. As Danzig noted, the investments of the Information Age “are what enable you to transform your existing fleet.”⁷⁴ Although understandable and perhaps unavoidable, the drive to afford the Navy’s two perennial goals, forward deployment and a balanced fleet, meant that naval strategy remained a narrowly pragmatic endeavor that focused on solving the operational, technological, and resource problems of the post-Cold War era.

The Navy Strategic Planning Guidance marked the first official high-level effort by the Navy to address the phenomenon of globalization and the maritime dimensions of strategy in a peacetime context. For the first time, the Navy related forward presence, systemic stability, and the health of the American and global economies to each other in a meaningful manner. One should not, however, make too much of this. The presidential campaigns in 1992, 1996, and 2000 hardly addressed foreign policy issues. Clinton was elected and reelected because the public believed the nation had to tend to its economic problems at home, and if his presidency was successful, it was because the economy improved. The touchstone issues were the economy, international stock markets, international currency exchange, foreign investment capital, and global trade. The headliners of the Clinton administration were not the secretaries of state or defense nor the chairmen of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, but Secretary of the Treasury Robert E. Rubin, and Alan Greenspan, the chairman of the U.S. Federal Reserve.⁷⁵

In many respects, Clinton had, in fact, elevated economic policy and trade to matters of strategic importance. Scholars were examining how the economic, political, social and technological dimensions of globalization and the trends in international finance and trade were leading to a profound shift from a state-centric to a market-dominated international economy and a reconfiguration of political power. Yet, given the nature of OPNAV and the backgrounds of its leaders, innovative strategic ideas were neither encouraged nor welcomed. The resource side of OPNAV dominated the staff’s

⁷⁴ Tom Philpott, “The U.S. Navy in 2000: An Unprecedented Pace of Operations,” *The Navy League* (January 2001), http://Navyleague.org/sea_power/jan_01_07.php#top.

⁷⁵ Alan Greenspan served as chairman of the U.S. Federal Reserve from 1987 to 2006.

activities and decision-making process. The formal analysis that held sway in OPNAV since the 1960s was based, for all intents and purposes, on the cost-benefit analysis of weapons systems in operational (and particularly kinetic) terms. The rise of jointness had altered and expanded the frame of reference within which the analysis was conducted, but it had not changed its basic nature.

There was no consideration of the role of the United States as the guardian of the international system that foremost served America's systemic goals, nor any conception of how to realize them, a state of affairs made worse by the capabilities-based approach, which was about how weapons would be used, not why. Despite a history that speaks of an interdependent relationship between foreign policy, trade, and the Navy, OPNAV bore no responsibility to think in systemic terms. It saw its function as determining what capabilities were required, and little else. The overwhelming focus of OPNAV was on meeting the CNO's Title 10 responsibilities of equipping, organizing, and training the fleet, which was manifested in the overwhelming emphasis placed on assembling the Navy's budget submission and lobbying Congress, OSD, and the Joint Staff on its behalf.

Representing the maritime dimensions of U.S. strategy was not understood to be a role worthy of much effort, nor were the reasons for having a strategy community made clear. Over time, the narrow focus on the means of warfare shaped a process in which the "Planning" portion of the Planning, Programming, and Budgeting System became inconsequential. Consequently, the Navy's strategists had few avenues to introduce innovations. The process of vetting strategic statements—which was designed to identify and codify consensus among the Navy's four-star commanders and many of its three-star admirals (the most powerful of these three-stars of whom worked in OPNAV)—further marginalized the strategists' ideas.

All of this meant, as Captain Joe Bouchard had noted, that for any strategic statement to see the light of day, it somehow had to support the Navy's current

programming and budget message and justify current programs.⁷⁶ In OPNAV, the strategist's job was to advocate and perhaps to educate, but not really to innovate. These deficiencies were compounded by the fact that arguments about the importance of the Navy for international trade and globalization invariably fell on deaf ears in Congress and among senior defense officials. Within OPNAV, the word "strategy" had more to do with its relationship to the other services than to the larger world. Harnessing arguments about the importance of the Navy in terms of "globalization," "international trade," and the "health of the U.S. economy" were clearly risky in contrast to the steady trade winds of American strategy and defense policy, which focused on warfighting and air power, and before which the Navy remained content to sail. Consequently, its "overarching strategic imperative," as the Navy Strategic Planning Guidance had noted, remained power projection—and the winds of war over the coming years would only sustain it.⁷⁷

⁷⁶ Captain Joseph F. Bouchard, U.S. Navy (Ret.), email message to Peter M. Swartz, March 20, 2006.

⁷⁷ "Navy Strategic Planning Guidance," 42.

X. SEAPOWER 21, 2000–04

A. BUSH REPRISSES THE AMERICAN COLD WAR APPROACH

In January 2001, George W. Bush (2001–07) assumed the presidency after a close and bitterly contested election in which his opponent had won a majority of the popular vote. Bush had little prior foreign policy experience, and had to rely on his experienced national security team. The team included two former secretaries of defense (Vice President Dick Cheney and Secretary of Defense Donald H. Rumsfeld), a former chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff (Secretary of State Colin Powell), a former undersecretary of defense for policy (Deputy Secretary of Defense Paul Wolfowitz) and a former assistant secretary of defense (Deputy Secretary of State Richard L. Armitage). Having spent their formative years in the Pentagon during the Cold War, they saw military power as the driving force of U.S. foreign policy. Unlike President Bill Clinton, they did not see globalization as central to America’s core interests or a catalyst for new threats. Republicans in general had shown little interest in understanding “globaloney,” as they called it.¹ The team thought U.S. foreign policy should not be based on economic relationships, but on great power politics backed up by a dominant military. As Bush noted, the military’s purpose was not to engage in “vague, aimless and endless deployments,” but to “deter wars—and win wars when deterrence fails.”²

To reassure a traumatized America, gain societal and international consensus, and organize the government in the wake of 9/11, President Bush used the rhetoric of the Cold War and reprised America’s Cold War approach, with its Manichean and threat-oriented outlook.³ Bush replaced the implacable Soviet threat with the implacable threat

¹ Derek H. Chollet and James M. Goldgeier, *America between the Wars, 11/9 to 9/11: The Misunderstood Years between the Fall of the Berlin Wall and the Start of the War on Terror* (New York: BBS Public Affairs, 2008), 275–277 and 326.

² Governor George W. Bush, speech, “A Period Of Consequences” (The Citadel, Charleston SC, September 23, 1999), http://www.citadel.edu/pao/addresses/pres_bush.html.

³ See Hal Brands, *From Berlin to Baghdad: Search for Purpose in the Post-Cold War World* (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 2008), 272–283.

from international terrorism. Before a joint session of Congress on September 20, 2001, Bush declared the nation was at war with the “enemies of freedom,” who threatened not just lives or property, but the American way of life and the values upon which the Republic was founded.⁴ “We have found our mission and our moment,” he noted. “The advance of human freedom...now depends on us.”⁵ He reduced complex issues into simple declarations, and divided the world into two irreconcilable camps, declaring, “Every nation...now has a decision to make. Either you are with us, or you are with the terrorists.”⁶ Bush wanted to strike back at al-Qaeda immediately, telling the military, “Be ready....The hour is coming when America will act.”⁷

B. TRANSFORMATION MANIA

President Bush was a true believer in the Revolution in Military Affairs, if only as a convert brought to it by his team of experts. His administration’s outlook was shaped by the general trends in post-Cold War defense policy, which, as Fred Kagan noted, saw war as “fundamentally a targeting drill and the only systems in the future that would matter would be those that improved America’s ability to put metal precisely on target.”⁸ The term used to convey Bush’s defense policy goals was “transformation,” a loosely defined concept that organized his ambitious defense reform plan, which was centered on network-centric warfare.⁹ As he noted, Bush wanted a “force that is defined less by size

⁴ President George W. Bush, speech, “Post-9/11 Address to a Joint session of Congress” (Washington, DC, September 20, 2001), <http://www.americanrhetoric.com/speeches/gwbush911jointsessionspeech.htm>.

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ Bob Woodward, *Bush at War* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 2002), 43 and Bush, “Post-9/11 Address.”

⁸ Frederick W. Kagan, *Finding the Target: The Transformation of American Military Policy* (New York: Encounter Books, 2006), 252.

⁹ According to the Bush administration, “Transformation results from the exploitation of new approaches to operational concepts and capabilities, the use of old and new technologies, and new forms of organization that more effectively anticipate new or still emerging strategic and operational challenges and opportunities and that render previous methods of conducting war obsolete or subordinate.” *Quadrennial Defense Review Report of 2001* (Washington, DC: Department of Defense, Government Printing Office, September 30, 2001), 29.

and more by mobility and swiftness, one that is easier to deploy and sustain, one that relies more heavily on stealth, precision weaponry, and information technologies.”¹⁰ Such a force would deter the rise of great powers and the aggressions of state actors and international terrorists. “The best way to keep the peace,” he noted, “is to redefine war on our terms.”¹¹

In office, however, Bush’s reform plans ebbed because of his \$1.35 trillion tax cut and modest defense budget. Transformation would therefore have to come at the expense of operating budgets, troops and weapons programs, a move that Congress and the Services planned to resist.¹² As Loren Thompson noted, the Services’ attitude was, “‘Look, I’m already overextended. Why do you need this money for something that hasn’t materialized?’”¹³ Amid the lack of political or public support for fundamental change, Secretary Rumsfeld’s attempts to bring change had, in Cheney’s words, provoked “a great deal of resistance on the Hill and I guess in the [Pentagon] as well....It is going to be tough, and he’s going to have to break some china. But he’s just the guy to do it.”¹⁴ Rumsfeld irked Congress when he missed the spring deadline for the release of the 2001 QDR, which would be based on Bush’s vision. Congress complained that both it and the military were being excluded from the process.¹⁵

Rumsfeld believed civilian control over the military had been undermined under Clinton, and he needed to reverse that tendency to implement change. Rumsfeld was not about to let the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff wield the power that Powell once had. Rumsfeld and his senior appointees in OSD brusquely reasserted control, alienating

¹⁰ President George W. Bush, speech, “Commencement Address at the United States Naval Academy” (Annapolis, MD: May 25, 2001), <http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/index.php?pid=45908&st=&st1=>.

¹¹ Bush, speech, “A Period Of Consequences.”

¹² Thomas E. Ricks, “For Rumsfeld, Many Roadblocks – Miscues—and Resistance—Mean Defense Review May Produce Less Than Promised,” *Washington Post*, August 7, 2001.

¹³ Richard Whittle, “War Speeds Up Pace of Change for Military,” *Dallas Morning News*, December 5, 2001.

¹⁴ Ricks, “For Rumsfeld, Many Roadblocks.”

¹⁵ *Ibid.*

the uniformed leadership in the process. “I think we’ll recover,” noted a Rumsfeld appointee, but conceded, “we’ve dug a steep hole to climb out of.”¹⁶ By September 2001, Rumsfeld’s defense reform had stalled amid bureaucratic infighting, and the general consensus in Washington was that it would ultimately fail, and that Rumsfeld would be the first cabinet member forced to resign.¹⁷

In short order, however, 9/11 and the opening front of the global war on terror in Afghanistan, termed Operation Enduring Freedom, seemingly vindicated the need for transformation. Enduring Freedom, which began on October 7, 2001, sought to topple the Taliban regime, capture Osama bin Laden and destroy al-Qaeda, and establish a new government.¹⁸ There was neither the patience on Bush’s part nor the infrastructure in the region to amass a Gulf War-like invasion, which the Central Intelligence Agency warned would only rally Afghanis and radical Islamists to the Taliban.¹⁹ Consequently, Rumsfeld had to employ an unconventional Central Intelligence Agency plan that used proxy tribal armies managed and paid by the agency’s operatives and U.S. air power to provide close air support, which was directed by 200 embedded U.S. special operations troops. Many predicted the United States would get bogged down and beaten by the same battle-hardened warriors that had defeated the Soviet invasion force in the 1980s.²⁰ Within two

¹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷ Vernon Loeb and Thomas E. Ricks, “1’s and 0’s Replacing Bullets in U.S. Arsenal,” *Washington Post*, February 2, 2002 and Bill Keller, “The Fighting Next Time,” *New York Times Magazine*, March 10, 2002.

¹⁸ The George W. Bush administration adopted the phrase “global war on terror” soon after 9/11 to describe in general terms the U.S.-led campaign to eliminate al-Qaeda and other Islamic terrorist organizations. Specifically, before a joint session of Congress on September 20, President Bush stated that “Our war on terror begins with al Qaeda, but it does not end there.” President George W. Bush, speech, “Post-9/11 Address to a Joint session of Congress” (Washington, DC, September 20, 2001), <http://www.americanrhetoric.com/speeches/gwbush911jointsessionspeech.htm>. The phrases “global war on terror,” “global war on terrorism,” and “war on terror,” for example, were used interchangeably by the administration without any real difference of meaning.

¹⁹ Kagan, *Finding the Target*, 290 and 296.

²⁰ See Ron Martz, “War on Terrorism: Backgrounder: U.S. Military Strategy,” *Atlanta Journal-Constitution*, December 8, 2001.

months, however, all the cities had been taken, the Taliban had been deposed, and al-Qaeda dispersed.

President Bush declared that Afghanistan was “a proving ground for this new approach.”²¹ The Department of Defense’s Director of Force Transformation, Art Cebrowski, agreed. He noted, “The need for transformation, I think, has been well established as compelling, and certainly after 9/11 it should be self-evident.”²² “This war is kind of a wake-up call for transformation,” added Andrew Krepinevich; it is “Exhibit A in the list of evidence that warfare is changing.”²³ Thompson noted, “Much of the resistance to transformation was based on the fact that new threats were nebulous. Now they’re not, so it’s going to be harder to resist changes in strategy and programs.”²⁴ Transformation mania swept through the defense establishment. It became the blueprint, the prescribed Big Idea, and the rubric by which the Services were measured even as they struggled to demonstrate that they were in fact “transforming.”

C. ENDURING FREEDOM AND THE CARRIER’S VINDICATION

Enduring Freedom validated the Navy’s post-Cold War emphasis on precision strike and information technologies, and the need for carriers in a way not seen since the Korean War. Five days after 9/11, two carriers were in the North Arabian Sea ready to launch strikes into Afghanistan. Two more arrived around the campaign’s start. One had deployed not with its air wing, but with U.S. Special Operations Forces and their helicopters, which used the carrier as a forward operating base. Unlike in Desert Storm, there were no suitable air bases close enough to support significant numbers of land-based tactical aircraft. U.S. Central Command had not developed a campaign plan for

²¹ President George W. Bush, speech, “Remarks at the Citadel; 2001” (The Citadel; Charleston, SC: December 11, 2001), <http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/index.php?pid=73494>.

²² “Special Briefing on Force Transformation,” PowerPoint brief presented by Vice Admiral Arthur K. Cebrowski, U.S. Navy (Ret.), Director, Office of Force Transformation, Department of Defense, Washington, DC, Pentagon, November 27, 2001, <http://www.defense.gov/transcripts/transcript.aspx?transcriptid=2462>.

²³ Whittle, “War Speeds Up Pace of Change for Military.”

²⁴ Ibid.

Afghanistan, and hence the United States had not approached neighboring states to build or secure access to airfields.²⁵

By necessity, the carriers became the campaign's primary strike element. Carrier aircraft were flying ten-hour missions to strike targets 400 to 750 miles away (which would not have been possible without extensive in-flight refueling by Air Force tankers). By the end of December 2001, carrier strike aircraft had flown 75 percent of the total number of U.S. strike sorties and expended 50 percent of the precision munitions.²⁶ Expensive standoff weapons like the Tomahawk were not needed after Afghani air defense systems were destroyed on the war's second night.²⁷ This war's targets were more mobile, and their destruction more time-critical than those encountered in the 1990–91 Gulf War or Bosnia. Close air support amounted to two-thirds of the carriers' strike sorties. The remainder consisted of interdiction strikes, and included time critical targets like high-priority al-Qaeda or Taliban leaders who had to be identified, tracked, and destroyed before they moved underground or into areas that might result in collateral damage if struck.²⁸ Consequently, as one Navy official noted, the joint air commander “could not get enough” fast and responsive strike fighters.²⁹ By the end of October 2001, almost all targets engaged were time-critical targets.³⁰ Eighty percent of carrier-based strike missions dropped ordnance on targets that were unknown to the aircrews before they launched.³¹ Such an environment was ill-suited to the Air Force's centralized planning and command structure, based as it was on set-piece battles and sequential campaigns. The war was a showcase for the adaptability of the Navy and air power's

²⁵ Kagan, *Finding the Target*, 293 and Rebecca Grant, *Battle-Tested: Carrier Aviation in Afghanistan and Iraq* (Washington, DC: IRIS, 2005), 28.

²⁶ Benjamin S. Lambeth, *American Carrier Air Power at the Dawn of a New Century* (Santa Monica, CA: RAND Corporation, 2005), 28. In contrast, Air Force strike fighters and bombers flew 11 percent and 10 percent, respectively.

²⁷ Grant, *Battle-Tested*, 38.

²⁸ Lambeth, *American Carrier Air Power*, 22.

²⁹ Grant, *Battle-Tested*, 38.

³⁰ Lambeth, *American Carrier Air Power*, 22.

³¹ *Ibid.*, 22–23.

increased precision and lethality. Of the naval munitions expended, 93 percent were precision-guided—either satellite-aided or laser-guided. Of the naval sorties that expended ordnance, 84 percent hit at least one target.³²

The war also demonstrated that carriers could form the backbone of a major joint air campaign. The Navy's carriers upheld the "decisiveness" of precision strike and network-centric warfare at a time when the White House had embraced these concepts as *the* locus of U.S. defense policy. By integrating naval aviation within the framework of joint operations, the Navy demonstrated that carrier strike warfare was just as sophisticated as the Air Force's, yet had unique advantages in speed, sustainability, and flexibility. As in the Korean War, the Navy's performance provided a concrete reminder of the need for its capabilities in a way that strategic statements or doctrine could not. As noted by the commander of U.S. Naval Air Forces Pacific, Vice Admiral John B. "Black" Nathman, "These were real effects. This was not about a point paper in the Pentagon."³³

D. CLARK RESTRUCTURES NAVY STRATEGY MAKING

In 2001, CNO Clark reorganized OPNAV's strategy-making structure to a degree not seen since the late 1970s, placing most of it directly under his control. As he had done on OPNAV's resource side, Clark established new offices with overlapping responsibilities, which created an environment that was even more competitive. After 9/11, Clark changed the QDR cell into the Navy Operations Group, which was expanded under Rear Admiral Joe Sestak and renamed "Deep Blue" in early 2002. Its director, Rear Admiral Jim Stavridis, reported directly to Clark. As Peter Swartz noted, Deep Blue's initial purpose was to develop innovative concepts to support those combat operations

³² Ibid., 23.

³³ Vice Admiral John B. Nathman, remarks, Armed Forces Communications and Electronics Association/U.S. Naval Institute Exposition, January 15, 2002, San Diego, CA, "Naval Aviation on Top in Afghanistan," *The Hook* 30, no.1 (Spring 2002): 8.

associated with the global war on terror.³⁴ Over time, however, Deep Blue became a multi-mission think tank staffed by the Navy's best and brightest. Like the Strategy and Concepts branch (N513) in the 1980s, Deep Blue became the locus of Navy thinking. The only difference, and it was a revealing one, was that Deep Blue was operationally oriented.

Sestak, who had led the QDR cell, became the director of the Assessments Division (N81)—which remains one of the most sought after, upwardly mobile billets in the Navy. He reported directly to the CNO as well as his immediate boss, the three-star admiral who was the deputy CNO for Resources, Warfare Requirements, and Assessments (N8). N81 was one of the most powerful offices in OPNAV, and its capacity and responsibilities for strategic thinking continued to expand throughout the decade.

Clark also established the Strategic Actions Group (N00Z), whose director, Captain Frank C. Pandolfe, also reported directly to him. Like Stavridis, Pandolfe had a PhD from Tufts University and was a member of the Navy's strategy community. Pandolfe had served in the Strategy and Concepts branch (N513) in 1996 under Commander Joe Bouchard before taking over in 1997. His group took over many of the duties of the CNO Executive Panel (N00K), which was led by Captain Joseph A. Benkert, such as writing policy papers and preparing the CNO for congressional testimony, although the CNO Executive Panel was still involved in strategy-making projects.

Including the Strategy and Policy Division (N51), Clark now had five offices—Deep Blue, N00Z, N00K, N81, and the Strategy and Concepts branch (N513)—working on five overlapping strategy projects during 2002 and 2003, numbers unprecedented in the post-Cold War era. The five projects were not well coordinated. Captain C. “Will”

³⁴ Peter M. Swartz with Karin Duggan, “U.S. Navy Capstone Strategies and Concepts (2001–2010): Strategy, Policy, Concept, and Vision Documents,” PowerPoint brief in PDF (Alexandria, VA: Center for Naval Analyses, December 2011), 35, slide 69, <http://www.cna.org/research/2011/us-navy-capstone-strategies-concepts-2001-2010>.

Dossel, who was the deputy N51 and the Strategy and Concepts branch chief, noted that rampant confusion reigned about which office was supposed to be doing what.³⁵

E. CLARK ALLOWS NAVY STRATEGIC THINKING TO ATROPHY

Because of Clark's focus on operational and resource problem-solving, and his belief that strategy was the responsibility of OSD and the Joint Staff, Clark allowed the Navy's capability for strategic thinking to atrophy to a level not seen since the early 1970s. That belief was only reinforced during the Rumsfeld years, a period when OSD aggressively reasserted civilian control over the Joint Staff and the Services, the latter of which, for all practical purposes, was prohibited from doing "strategy."³⁶ They could do doctrine and "visions" (although Rumsfeld put a stop to the Services' glossy self-serving pamphlets), and were encouraged to think globally, but they could not do strategy.³⁷ For the Services to develop a strategy on their own was viewed as gross insubordination.

In OPNAV, N3/N5 became known as "Big 3/little 5," meaning senior leaders focused on the here and now of current operations and ignored broad strategic planning.³⁸ Despite the intense lobbying efforts by the leaders of N51 and even N3/N5, senior Navy leaders were not interested in a big-picture strategy, at least anything beyond the Navy next budget submission.³⁹ As it had been through most of 1991, the billet for the deputy CNO for Plans, Policies and Operations (N3/N5) was gapped for most of 2002. When Vice Admiral Kevin P. Green arrived in October 2002, he reportedly told Clark that the Navy did not have a strategy, that it needed one, and he was going to write one. In a

³⁵ Captain C. Will Dossel, U.S. Navy (Ret.), email message to Peter M. Swartz, June 23, 2005. (Dossel, who was the deputy for Strategy and Policy [N51], took over as the Strategy and Concepts branch chief from September 2001 to the fall of 2003.)

³⁶ Author's experience while working in the Joint Staff J5 Strategic Plans and Policy Directorate from December 2000 to December 2003.

³⁷ Commander Paul N. Nagy, U.S. Navy (Ret.), discussion with the author, March 4, 2010, McLean, VA. (Nagy served in the Strategy and Concepts branch [N513/N5SC] from December 2001 to September 2007, which included several stints as its branch chief.)

³⁸ Dossel, email and Nagy, discussion with the author.

³⁹ Dossel, email.

profoundly revealing statement, Clark replied that the Navy had a strategy, and it was called the POM (i.e., the Navy's Program Objective Memorandum).⁴⁰ Like most N3/N5s, Green had been appointed for how the CNO saw the task at hand, which was not strategy, at least according to Clark, but operations, which in this case were those associated with Enduring Freedom and, more importantly, those already being prepared for the invasion of Iraq in early 2003.

The management of the Navy's strategy community by the Bureau of Personnel and OPNAV's leaders was no longer a priority.⁴¹ Increasingly, the one-star admirals that led N51 and the officers assigned to it were relatively more junior, this at a time when, following Goldwater-Nichols, the Navy was been sending its best, most promising officers to the Joint Staff and OSD. Moreover, those that led and were assigned to N51 lacked the educational backgrounds and experience in strategy billets of those that came before, which meant they had little awareness of the ideas that had animated previous strategic documents.

Between 1970, when the N51 billet was created, and 1997, when the billet was downgraded to a one star, the head of N51 had almost always been a strategy-minded two-star admiral, whose advancement was already assured just by being in the billet. Now, the one-star admirals who led N51, which for most was their first tour as an admiral, felt the need to prove their worth, particularly against those one-star admirals in N8 who were in traditionally more upwardly mobile billets. At stake was, of course, advancement. Less than half of the eligible one-star admirals in OPNAV were selected for carrier battle group command, the next rung for surface officers and aviators. They sought to break out against their peers in terms of responding to the day-to-day priorities of the CNO and N3/N5, priorities that rarely concerned themselves with strategy, broadly speaking.

⁴⁰ Interviews conducted by Peter M. Swartz as discussed with the author, November 20, 2009, Alexandria, VA.

⁴¹ Paragraph based on Nagy, discussion with the author.

Most of those that led N3/N5 and N51 who were not from the Navy's strategy community felt little responsibility for the deteriorating health of that community, which—having reached its heyday in the 1980s with the *Maritime Strategy*—was no longer held in such high regard, its “band of brothers” mentality a thing of the past. The locus of the community—the Strategy and Concepts branch (N513)—languished, and became a quiet place to work, the victim of a lack of interest from previous CNOs and particularly Clark, who turned elsewhere for his strategic work. The branch became a “rump office.” Its officers were farmed out around OPNAV, particularly to the Assessments Division (N81), for various manpower-deficient projects.⁴² For the first time since the 1970s, the branch lacked an officer with a doctorate (and remains so to the present). Although the civilian graduate program in political science and international relations was maintained, the other pipeline for educating strategists—the two-year Strategic Planning master's degree curriculum in the Naval Postgraduate School's National Security Affairs department, which had been in existence since 1982—was terminated shortly before 9/11 on the grounds of cost.⁴³ That pipeline had been popular because the Navy could graduate far more officers per dollar spent with that program than with its civilian master's degree and PhD programs, which were at institutions such as Tufts and Stanford.

There were other signs as well. After four of the ten members of the Navy's Strategy and Concepts branch (N513), including its chief, Captain Robert E. Dolan, were killed when American Airlines Flight 77 hit the Pentagon on September 11, 2001 (a fifth member was seriously injured), Navy leaders made no effort to rebuild the branch, which

⁴² Lieutenant Commander Mark W. Lawrence, discussion with the author, March 3, 2010, Arlington, VA. (Lawrence served in the Strategy and Concepts branch [N513/N5SC] from the fall of 2003 to 2005.)

⁴³ Naval Postgraduate School Superintendent Rear Admiral David R. Ellison (2001–04), who had a PhD in Business Administration, argued that the two-year Strategic Planning curriculum should be shut-down as it had too few Navy students (which, however, was not unusual for most curricula at the Naval Postgraduate School), and was redundant given the Naval War College's nine-month-long master's degree in National Security and Strategic Studies, which, unlike the Strategic Planning program, did not require a thesis. (The author is a 1998 graduate of the Naval Postgraduate School's Strategic Planning master's degree program.)

remained staffed at 40 percent for some time.⁴⁴ The detailing of alumni of N51 to the Naval Postgraduate School to teach maritime strategy and fill the soon-to-be-cut Strategic Planning Chair was terminated. The once influential Navy strategy discussion group, which was comprised of active duty and retired officers from the Navy's strategy community and naval scholars and analysts that had gathered once a month in Washington, DC and had been run by David Rosenberg (a PhD, noted naval historian, and Navy reserve intelligence officer) ended in 2005 after a thirteen-year run.⁴⁵ The mandate of the Naval War College-based Strategic Studies Group, the one-year strategic think tank for upwardly mobile Navy captains and Marine colonels that had started in the early 1980s and had been influential in the development of the *Maritime Strategy*, was to focus on technological concept generation.⁴⁶ While the curriculum of the Naval War College continued to focus on jointness and management, its annual "Global" wargame series, which it ran for the CNO starting in 1979, was ended by Admiral Clark in 2001, ostensibly for reasons of cost.

In short, Clark, the longest serving CNO of the post-Cold War, did not think the Navy was responsible for generating an independent capability for strategic thinking despite the fact that he leaned heavily on what was essentially the last group of officers from the Navy's strategy community that fully matriculated before the onset of

⁴⁴ Dossel, email. Also killed were Commander William H. Donovan, Commander Patrick Dunn, and Lieutenant Commander David L. Williams. Lieutenant Kevin Shaeffer survived, having suffered burns over 40 percent of his body.

⁴⁵ The group's demise was in part due to disagreements between those in the group that questioned the need to invade Iraq or, at least, the Bush administration's rationale for going to war, and those that supported the decision. Captain C. Will Dossel, U.S. Navy (Ret.), email message to the author, May 14, 2012. By 2008, however, Robby Harris, supported by Peter Swartz and Dick Diamond, led its revival and return as a lively, informative, and influential group that meets monthly to host talks by high-ranking U.S. officials (including the CNO), analysts, and scholars.

⁴⁶ In 1995, CNO Mike Boorda changed the focus of the Strategic Studies Group from strategy to talismanic leading edge technological concepts, a decision which, given the nature of the Navy's shortcomings that were identified in the aftermath of the 1990–91 Gulf War, was understandable, at least until the fleet's superb performance in the opening months of Operation Enduring Freedom in Afghanistan demonstrated that those shortcomings had been rectified.

Goldwater-Nichols, which in effect meant that Clark abdicated any responsibility for representing the maritime dimensions of American strategy.

F. THE GLOBAL CONCEPT OF OPERATIONS

In early 2002, the Assessments Division (N81) started work on an operational concept. The effort was in response to the Bush administration's new force planning construct that was outlined in the QDR. The QDR outlined a strategy based on four goals: 1) assure allies and friends of America's steadfastness of purpose and ability to fulfill its security commitments; 2) dissuade future military competition; 3) deter aggression by threats and coercion against U.S. interests by deploying forward forces able to decisively; and 4) defeat any adversary if deterrence fails.⁴⁷ The military's new force planning construct was based the "1-4-2-1" concept, which represented a shift from the 1990s' construct based on fighting two regional conflicts nearly simultaneously. The 1-4-2-1 construct represented the need to defend the homeland (said to be a unique and singular task); maintain regionally tailored forces forward-deployed in four regions—Europe, Northeast Asia, the East Asian littoral, and the Middle East/Southwest Asia; swiftly defeat attacks in any two of the four more or less simultaneously; and be able to "win decisively" (i.e., occupy a country and overthrow its government) in one of the two.⁴⁸

The problem was how to provide continuous combat-centric forward presence with a fleet that had only enough ships and forward-based infrastructure to support three, not four regions. During the Cold War, to keep more ships forward deployed longer, the Navy established two operating "hubs"—one in the Mediterranean and another in the Western Pacific. After the petroleum crises in the Persian Gulf and the fundamentalist Islamic takeover of Iran and the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan in 1979, the Navy established a third one in the Middle East and Indian Ocean. In 1991, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff General Colin Powell established the Global Naval Force Presence

⁴⁷ *Quadrennial Defense Review Report of 2001*, iii–iv and 11–13.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 17–21.

Policy to ensure that U.S. naval assets were evenly distributed among the regional CINCs to meet their respective presence requirements. Over the 1990s, those requirements increased to the point where it became impossible to have a carrier battle group present 100 percent of the time in each of the hubs. The two-week gaps between the departure of a carrier battle group and the arrival of the next were being filled by an amphibious ready group (i.e., two or three amphibious assault ships with Marines on board) combined with a Tomahawk-equipped surface action group. With 313 ships, however, the Navy was hard pressed to cover even three regions.

In N81, Commander Steve Richter developed a plan to maximize the fleet's combat flexibility. The plan was based on several of Deep Blue's operational concepts, which included the Carrier Strike Group, the Expeditionary Strike Group, and the Afloat Forward Staging Base. The fleet was based on twenty-four strike groups—twelve carrier battle groups and twelve amphibious ready groups (each of the latter had a Marine expeditionary unit attached as well). Yet only the carrier battle groups and the seven Tomahawk-equipped surface action groups (about three ships each) had the long-range striking power deemed necessary to deter aggression. Richter shifted the Tomahawk-equipped cruisers and destroyers from the carrier battle groups—as the carrier's precision-strike capabilities had proven lethal enough by themselves in Enduring Freedom—to the twelve amphibious ready groups. Carrier battle groups were now known as “carrier strike groups”—which now had fewer surface combatants and fewer submarines in each, while the amphibious ready groups were now known as “expeditionary strike groups.” He also made two additional surface action groups (which also provided theater ballistic missile defense). On top of that he added the four *Ohio*-class ballistic missile submarines that had been permanently reconfigured to carry 154 Tomahawks each. Instead of twenty-four strike groups, the Navy now had thirty-seven.

The “Global Concept of Operations” was intended for joint and naval operational planners, and proved highly influential for a time inside the Navy and the Pentagon. Vice Admiral Mike Mullen, deputy CNO for Resources, Requirements and Assessments (N8), used Richter's concept in the spring and summer of 2002 to justify to Congress and OSD

the shipbuilding program required for a 375-ship fleet. As in 1994, the Navy sought to parlay presence requirements into more ships. In the summer of 2002, the Global Concept of Operations was incorporated into *Sea Power 21* and went public soon after. Reportedly, OSD policy-makers were impressed with it, even calling it transformational.⁴⁹ But neither the operational side of N3/N5 nor the CINCs—which, following an order by Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld in October 2002, were now known as “combatant commanders”—was happy with the assertion that an expeditionary strike group could “substitute” for a carrier battle group.

G. SEA POWER 21

Captain Frank Pandolfe started work on *Sea Power 21* in early 2002. *Sea Power 21* was a complex, sprawling, and multi-faceted beast. Of the Navy’s post-war strategic statements, few sought to solve a greater range of problems. It sought to: demonstrate the Navy was transforming; develop a new strategic approach based on the administration’s 1-4-2-1 construct; and assert the Navy was a fully integrated joint player, not just an enabling force. Indirectly, it sought to: justify Clark’s goal of a 375-ship fleet; establish a new cross-functional analysis approach for OPNAV; codify, explain, and promote Clark’s resource-related initiatives; and align his new structure. Reporting directly to Clark allowed Pandolfe to avoid the entangling agendas of OPNAV’s three-star and the Navy’s four-star admirals, which went some ways in ensuring a more coherent document, one true to the views of Clark, who was not looking for a “strategy”—in other words, a document that lays out means-ways-ends thinking in terms of a specific force structure and weapons systems—but a “vision,” which asserted a strategic approach in conceptual terms, and avoided being tied to resource-related issues.

In June 2002, CNO Clark introduced *Sea Power 21* in a speech entitled “Sea Power 21: Operational Concepts for a New Era.”⁵⁰ Having achieved success in the first

⁴⁹ Commander Paul N. Nagy, U.S. Navy (Ret.), email message to Peter M. Swartz, June 22, 2005.

⁵⁰ Admiral Vern E. Clark, remarks, “Sea Power 21: Operational Concepts for a New Era” (Current Strategy Forum, Naval War College, Newport, RI, June 12, 2002).

two of his top five priorities—manpower and current readiness—he noted it was time to turn to the next one, future readiness, which was what *Sea Power 21* was, at least to him, essentially all about. He said that future readiness meant transformation, noting, “*Sea Power 21* is the most complete, and recent, depiction of the Navy’s transformation vision.”⁵¹ *Sea Power 21* was the basis for the Navy’s transformational roadmap, which Secretary Rumsfeld had asked the Services to submit by June 2002.⁵² In the speech, Clark sketched out a strategic environment where a broad range of regional powers and widely dispersed and well-funded international terrorist and criminal organizations threatened U.S. interests with frequent and often unforeseen crises. He explained how *Sea Power 21*’s primary elements, Sea Strike, Sea Shield, and Sea Basing, were tied together by the network-centric concept of ForceNet, and supported by three “implementing initiatives,” Sea Trial, Sea Warrior, and Sea Enterprise. (See Figure 4.)

In the October 2002 issue of *Proceedings*, Clark laid out *Sea Power 21* in more detail.⁵³ The article was the first in a series of nine such articles that were published in *Proceedings* over the next two years—each written by a high-ranking admiral, one for each of the seven elements as well as one on the Global Concept of Operations.⁵⁴

⁵¹ Ibid.

⁵² Swartz, “U.S. Navy Capstone Strategies and Concepts (2001–2010),” 15, slide 30.

⁵³ Admiral Vern Clark, “Sea Power 21: Projecting Decisive Joint Capabilities” U.S. Naval Institute *Proceedings* 128, no. 10 (October 2002): 32–41.

⁵⁴ Vice Admirals Mike Bucci and Michael G. Mullen, “Sea Shield: Projecting Global Defensive Assurance,” U.S. Naval Institute *Proceedings* 128, no. 11 (November 2002): 56–59; Vice Admirals Cutler Dawson and John Nathman, “Sea Strike: Projecting Persistent, Responsive, and Precise Power,” U.S. Naval Institute *Proceedings* 128, no. 12 (December 2002): 54–57; Vice Admiral Charles W. Moore and Lieutenant General Edward Hanlon Jr., U.S. Marine Corps, “Sea Basing: Operational Independence for a New Century,” U.S. Naval Institute *Proceedings* 129, no. 1 (January 2003): 80–85; Vice Admirals Richard W. Mayo and John Nathman, “ForceNet: Turning Information into Power,” U.S. Naval Institute *Proceedings* 129, no. 2 (February 2003): 42–46; Vice Admiral Michael G. Mullen, “Global Concept of Operations,” U.S. Naval Institute *Proceedings* 129, no. 4 (April 2003): 66–69; Vice Admirals Alfred G. Harms Jr., Gerald L. Hoewing, and John B. Totushek, “Sea Warrior: Maximizing Human Capital,” U.S. Naval Institute *Proceedings* 129, no. 6 (June 2003): 48–52; Admiral Robert J. Natter, “Sea Trial: Enabler for a Transformed Fleet,” U.S. Naval Institute *Proceedings* 129, no. 11 (November 2003): 62–66; and Admiral Michael G. Mullen, “Sea Enterprise: Resourcing Fleet,” U.S. Naval Institute *Proceedings* 130, no. 1 (January 2004): 60–63.



Figure 4. The Sea Power 21 Construct

The article's opening paragraph summed up *Sea Power 21*'s strategic approach:

The 21st century sets the stage for tremendous increases in naval precision, reach, and connectivity, ushering in a new era of joint operational effectiveness. Innovative concepts and technologies will integrate sea, land, air, space, and cyberspace to a greater extent than ever before. In this unified battlespace, the sea will provide a vast maneuver area from which to project direct and decisive power around the globe.⁵⁵

The article highlighted the “unified battlespace” concept that had been sketched out by Bill Owens, theorized by Art Cebrowski, and articulated in Joe Sestak's “A Maritime Strategy for the 21st Century.” As evinced in *Enduring Freedom*, the Navy was emphatically portrayed as more than an enabling force: the full title of *Sea Power 21* is “Sea Power 21: Projecting Decisive Joint Capabilities.” Pandolfe had seen the negative effects of *Forward...From the Sea*'s de-emphasis on “decisive” naval power and emphasis on the “enabling” role of the Navy and the Marine Corps.⁵⁶

⁵⁵ Clark, “Sea Power 21, Projecting Decisive Joint Capabilities,” 33.

⁵⁶ Captain Joseph F. Bouchard, U.S. Navy (Ret.), email message to Peter M. Swartz, July 25, 2006.

The inherent advantages of sea-based forces were also noted. Highly mobile, self-defending, and self-sustaining naval forces used the seas as a “vast maneuver area” to broaden the range of possibilities the enemy had to prepare for. Most of this reflected Commander Joe Bouchard’s ideas on naval maneuver warfare. As in the Navy Operational Concept and “Anytime, Anywhere,” *Sea Power 21* emphasized that local sea and area control was required to unify the battlespace. Clark asserted U.S. naval forces gave the United States “unique” and “powerful” “asymmetric strengths” that were difficult for regional and transnational adversaries to counter.⁵⁷

Sea Strike was essentially the same as Sestak’s Battlespace Attack—it was about projecting “precise” and “persistent” offensive firepower. Sea Shield encompassed Sestak’s Battlespace Control, which emphasized layered defenses to ensure sea control and area control. It also added the ability to project defensive power deep overland with theater ballistic missile defense, and addressed the growing concern among Navy leaders about the proliferation of advanced “anti-access” technologies among regional powers that could deny the ability of U.S. naval forces to project power. It also incorporated Sestak’s Forward Presence. And it expanded Sea Shield beyond Battlespace Control to include defense of the homeland, even from ballistic missiles. Sea Shield sought to integrate forward deployed naval forces with new post-9/11 civil and military agencies to “extend the security of the United States far seaward, taking advantage of the time and space afforded naval forces to shield our nation from impending threats.”⁵⁸ As in the Cold War, the Navy saw its role in terms of forward defense, which of course required forward deployment.

Sea Basing was about putting more capabilities at sea to support joint and coalition operations, which included “offensive and defensive firepower, maneuver forces, command and control, and logistics.”⁵⁹ It reflected both Bouchard’s thinking

⁵⁷ Clark, “Sea Power 21, Projecting Decisive Joint Capabilities,” 34.

⁵⁸ Ibid., 35.

⁵⁹ Moore and Hanlon, “Sea Basing: Operational Independence for a New Century,” 80.

about the advantages of operating at sea and Sestak's Battlespace Sustainment as well as Owens's ideas about a mobile "sea base," which was a floating airstrip for land-based aircraft that could house thousands of Marines and soldiers. The article noted, "As enemy access to weapons of mass destruction grows, and the availability of overseas bases declines, it is compelling both militarily and politically to reduce the vulnerability of U.S. forces through expanded use of secure, mobile, networked sea bases."⁶⁰ ForceNet was the "glue" that bound Sea Strike, Sea Shield, and Sea Basing together, and reflected Sestak's Knowledge Superiority.

In short, *Sea Power 21*'s strategic approach was similar to that of ...*From the Sea*. Their approaches were heavily kinetic. Both staked out major conflict as the Navy's primary purpose. Both downplayed the Navy's role on either side of it. *Sea Power 21* was about dominating the battlefield by means of high-end weapons systems that were designed more for fighting regional powers than chasing shadowy terrorists or operating in the nooks and crannies of the littoral. It emphasized standoff precision strike warfare as a freestanding strategic expedient, supplemented and supported by communication and surveillance technologies. Globalization, international trade, or the global economy was not addressed. Nor were presence missions in support of political and economic objectives. After Enduring Freedom—which, compared to Operation Desert Storm in 1991, did not see a large-scale deployment of the Army or the Air Force—the Navy was not about to yield the field of major conflict. The Navy proved it was more than a nighttime crisis manager or a doorman for larger follow-on ground and air forces. Power projection reigned supreme at the center of the Navy's strategic vision—"transformation" was suiting the Navy just fine.

Sea Power 21 was more influential over a longer period time than perhaps any strategic statement in the post-Cold War era other than ...*From the Sea*, of which it was, in any case, an echo and elaboration. Unusual for a Navy strategic statement, it was well timed, coming after the articulation of new defense policies and success in combat that

⁶⁰ Clark, "Sea Power 21, Projecting Decisive Joint Capabilities," 36–37.

“vindicated” those policies and the Navy’s post-Cold War emphasis on precision strike warfare and information technologies. It came after an eight-year drought since the previous major statement, *Forward...From the Sea*. It had a simple construct, which was repeated relentlessly in articles, congressional testimony, and speeches by senior Navy leaders. Also unusual, it had the interest and steady backing of the CNO, and benefited from an organized and sustained rollout campaign involving high-ranking admirals to demonstrate consensus.⁶¹

Sea Power 21 was not influential outside the Navy, however. It said all the right things about jointness, but in tone and substance it was overtly parochial, perhaps reflecting Pandolfe’s thinking more than Clark’s. Although touted as a “new operational construct,” many did not see anything new or innovative in it. It synthesized and repackaged ideas from Owens, Cebrowski, Bouchard, and Pandolfe himself, when he was in the Strategy and Concepts branch (N513). There was little about it that was thought to be “transformational,” a concept whose meaning was never easy to pin down anyway. Weapons systems already in the pipeline were touted as transformational. No major programs were cancelled to free up funds for new initiatives.⁶² The Navy wanted to modernize incrementally, not skip a technological generation.⁶³ Its transformation efforts rested on network-centric warfare, which was already becoming a familiar idea to the rest of the defense establishment. Yet, even if Clark wanted to radically transform the fleet, its basic structure could not be changed in less than a decade. The only way to do so was by using advanced technology. With a fleet that cannot be radically changed and whose precepts such as sea control and forward presence are enduring, one should not be too dismissive of efforts to repackage ideas, particularly given Washington’s constant demand for change.

⁶¹ Swartz, “U.S. Navy Capstone Strategies and Concepts (2001–2010),” 28, slide 56.

⁶² See Peter J. Dombrowski and Andrew L. Ross, “Transforming the Navy: Punching a Feather Bed?” *Naval War College Review* 56, no. 3 (Summer 2003): 116–118.

⁶³ *Ibid.*, 117.

Sea Power 21 did not resonate in the fleet either. It was laden with buzzwords, whose meanings are less self-evident the further one is from the Beltway. Few saw it as new or innovative.⁶⁴ Its four-element construct was simple, but abstract. Sea Strike was understandable, but Sea Shield and Sea Basing were not. Sea Shield was defensive-minded, and smacked of seeking political support for more ships with ballistic missile defense capabilities. As for Sea Basing, it was hard to see it as a mission; it was just something that happened when a group of ships gathered for a task. It was either about promoting the carrier's use as a joint forward operating base or it was a concession to the Marines, who were developing a somewhat grandiose sea basing plan, called the Maritime Prepositioning Force (Future) that could move Marines rapidly across the seas and sustain them in combat. The Strike-Shield-Basing construct also obscured Admiral Stansfield Turner's generally accepted construct of strategic deterrence, sea control, power projection, and naval presence.⁶⁵ While they may be important, concepts like Sea Enterprise, Sea Warrior, and Sea Trial were not about operations, which was the fleet's bailiwick, but the concerns of shore-based admirals.

But then again, the primary problem that Clark was trying to solve with *Sea Power 21* was more managerial and programmatic than strategic. He focused on improving the fleet's readiness and finding the cost efficiencies required to fund the fleet's expansion. These efforts were only loosely connected with *Sea Power 21*'s strategic approach, which gave *Sea Power 21* its Janus-faced look. One face was the strategic approach whose tone was reminiscent of the *Maritime Strategy* (as were many post-Cold War era strategic statements written by the Navy's strategists), and the other face looked to organize, integrate, and align the service to improve readiness and achieve cost-efficiencies. From Clark's perspective, *Sea Power 21* was more about explaining his intrusive, resource-related initiatives to the fleet (as well as to OSD and Congress) and

⁶⁴ See Commander Jeff Huber, U.S. Navy (Ret.), "Invasion of the Transformers," U.S. Naval Institute *Proceedings* 129, no. 10 (October 2003): 74–76 and Lieutenant Commander Jon R. Olson, "An Alternate Vision of Sea Power 21," U.S. Naval Institute *Proceedings* 129, no. 10 (October 2003): 80–83.

⁶⁵ Swartz, "U.S. Navy Capstone Strategies and Concepts (2001–2010)," 26, slide 51.

establishing a well-understood and institutionally acceptable framework to align the Navy's expanded resource and administrative activities than it was about promoting a new strategic approach. In these regards, *Sea Power 21* was successful.

One of Clark's initiatives was the installation of a cross-functional assessment approach in OPNAV, which was based on the four primary elements of *Sea Power 21*. It maintained a capabilities-based outlook, but the approach proved more successful than its predecessors—Owens's Joint Mission Area and Archie Clemens's Integrated Warfare Architectures.⁶⁶ Shortly after 9/11, Clark had established the U.S. Fleet Forces Command, which was the Navy component command of U.S. Joint Forces Command. Rumsfeld had made U.S. Joint Forces Command into a functional unified command responsible for training the military, and turned it into his agent of transformative change.⁶⁷ Located in Norfolk, Virginia (which is 200 miles south of Washington, DC), U.S. Fleet Forces Command was headed by a four-star admiral, who soon became the CNO's right-hand man, his executive agent in ensuring the fleet was organized, manned, trained, equipped, and ready to be assigned to the CINCs/combatant commanders. U.S. Fleet Forces Command was responsible for integrating the fleet's warfighting capabilities requirements, developing joint and operational concepts, determining the fleet's deployment schedules, and dictating how the fleet would train and at what cost.

In essence, Clark shifted many of the responsibilities that had belonged to OPNAV to U.S. Fleet Forces Command. In particular, the responsibilities of the barons—the one-star admirals who were the community representatives in OPNAV—were in effect shifted to the warfare communities' three-star shore-establishment "type commands" (like Naval Air Forces Pacific), whose primary responsibility was to support the fleet and which reported directly to U.S. Fleet Forces Command. Clark also

⁶⁶ See Swartz, "U.S. Navy Capstone Strategies and Concepts (2001–2010)," 27, slide 54.

⁶⁷ In the early 1990s, General Colin Powell and Admiral Paul David Miller had started the transformation of U.S. Atlantic Command, a regional unified command whose area of responsibility included the Atlantic Ocean, into what became the U.S. Joint Forces Command in 1999, which was not a regional unified command, having lost its geographic-based responsibilities, but a functional one.

established the Naval Network Warfare Command, and placed it and the Naval Warfare Development Command, which was based in Newport, Rhode Island, under U.S. Fleet Forces Command.

U.S. Fleet Forces Command led the “Enterprise,” which became a profound term, like “the fleet” and “operations,” whose saliency was assumed to be self-evident. As noted by Vice CNO Mullen,

Involving Navy headquarters, the systems commands, and every commander throughout the Navy, [the Enterprise] seeks to improve organizational alignment, refine requirements, and reinvest the savings to help us recapitalize and transform the force. It provides a means to scrutinize the Navy’s spending practices from the top line all the way to the bottom dollar....It is about delivering the right force, with the right readiness, at the right cost.⁶⁸

The Enterprise was to draw “on lessons from the business revolution” to “reduce overhead, streamline processes, substitute technology for manpower, and create incentives for positive change.”⁶⁹ The practices were utilized as part of Sea Warrior to ensure the “the right skills are in the right place at the right time.”⁷⁰ The Enterprise sought to deliver greater process efficiencies, divest “non-core” functions, streamline organizations, and enhance the investment in warfighting effectiveness.

Enterprise mania swept through the service. Terms such as “Six Sigma,” “Lean Manning,” and “Cost-Wise Readiness” entered the fleet’s lexicon.⁷¹ Revealingly, the books that CNO Clark selected for his recommended reading list, which were distributed throughout the fleet, were not naval classics, as generally had been the case with previous CNOs, but were almost exclusively about management and corporate leadership. In time,

⁶⁸ Mullen, “Sea Enterprise,” 60. The Systems Commands were Naval Air Systems Command, Naval Sea Systems Command, Naval Supply Systems Command, Naval Facilities Systems Command, and Space and Naval Systems Warfare Command.

⁶⁹ Clark, “Sea Power 21, Projecting Decisive Joint Capabilities” 40.

⁷⁰ Ibid.

⁷¹ Six Sigma is a process developed by the corporate world to root out time or cost inefficiencies in production and repair, and which uses quantitative methods to find duplicative or prohibitively time-consuming steps, for example.

the Enterprise became a crusade, the cost-efficiency metrics of which permeated almost every activity of operational units, even those in combat.⁷² Clark's initiatives were his crowning achievement, and his legacy. They impressed Congress and provided a model for the other services, which were far behind in such thinking, and can be counted among the Navy's most notable successes in the post-Cold War era. But it was a managerial success, not a strategic one.

In the end, *Sea Power 21* suffered from debilitating inconsistencies. It was essentially the work of strategists who sought to organize Clark's far-ranging initiatives around a conceptual framework that made clear his management priorities in a way that also defined the Navy's purpose as strike-oriented power projection. But, to Clark, its primary purpose was to explain his initiatives and align, organize, and integrate his new structure. The audience was internal and the focus was on programmatics, the budget, and cost-efficiencies. At the same time, *Sea Power 21* also asserted the comparative importance of the Navy, which meant the audience was external and the focus was on operations. Pandolfe's desire for a vision that could elevate its central ideas without the restraints of resource issues was frustrated by Clark's focus on management and the increasing use of *Sea Power 21* by elements in OPNAV to rationalize a litany of new weapons programs, which opened the Navy up to accusations that *Sea Power 21* was little more than a justification for a 375-ship navy.⁷³

H. NAVAL POWER 21...A NAVAL VISION

In October 2002, Secretary of the Navy Gordon R. England (2003–06), CNO Clark, and Commandant of the Marine Corps General James Jones signed out "Naval Power 21...A Naval Vision." It was the first joint Navy-Marine Corps strategic statement

⁷² Author's experience while commanding a squadron that was flying combat sorties off of the USS *Carl Vinson* in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom in the summer of 2005.

⁷³ Dave Ahearn, "Report Assails LCS Program as Unwise, Hits CNO on Fleet Growth," *Navy News Now*, May 1, 2003. The cited report is Robert O. Work, "Naval Transformation and the Littoral Combat Ship," Washington, DC: Center for Strategic and Budgetary Assessments, February 2004, <http://www.csbaonline.org/wp-content/uploads/2011/03/2004.02.18-Littoral-Combat-Ship.pdf>.

since 1994's *Forward...From the Sea*. Naval Power 21 was an attempt by England to provide an overarching document that summarized and encompassed both *Sea Power 21* and the Marines' *Marine Corps Strategy 21*, which was based on its *Expeditionary Maneuver Warfare* document of 2001. England wanted to endorse both visions, support Clark's goal of a larger fleet with more deep strike capabilities, and otherwise bring the two services closer.⁷⁴ The relationship was improving in any case, as it usually did when budgets were larger and the Navy eschewed global maritime thinking.

Naval Power 21 was a straightforward document developed for England by Stavridis in Deep Blue, as supported by Captain Dossel in the Strategy and Concepts branch (N513). It envisioned naval power as resting on three pillars. The first is "*We assure access*. Assuring sea-based access worldwide for military operations, diplomatic interaction, and humanitarian relief efforts." The second is "*We fight and win*. Projecting power to influence events at sea and ashore both at home and overseas." And finally, "*We are continually transforming to improve....*The ability to transform is at the heart of America's competitive advantage and a foundation of our strength."⁷⁵ Its purpose was to define how the naval forces "will be equipped, trained, educated, organized, and employed both today and in the future."⁷⁶ The document, which was published on the Internet, had little influence or follow-up by England, and was remarkable only to the extent that all three leaders signed it, and that it called for a renewed attempt at a "naval operational concept"—a project that was already in progress, but foundering badly, the victim of irreconcilable differences between the Navy and the Marine Corps.

⁷⁴ Swartz, "U.S. Navy Capstone Strategies and Concepts (2001–2010)," 33, slide 65.

⁷⁵ "Naval Power 21...A Naval Vision," Secretary of the Navy Gordon R. England, Admiral Vernon E. Clark, and General James L. Jones, U.S. Marine Corps, Department of the Navy, October 2002, 1, <http://www.Navy.mil/Navydata/people/secnav/england/navpow21.pdf>. Emphasis in the original.

⁷⁶ "Naval Power 21...A Naval Vision," 4.

I. THE NAVAL OPERATING CONCEPT FOR JOINT OPERATIONS

The development of a naval operational concept, the first since the failed attempt in 1996, had started in early 2002 under the direction of Captain Will Dossel. Ostensibly, its aim, like that of the earlier effort, was to articulate how the Navy-Marine Corps team would contribute to the joint force, a problem that was now reinterpreted in terms of the 1-4-2-1 construct promoted in *Sea Power 21*, and in light of new operational concepts like Sea Basing, in which the Marine Corps had a major stake.⁷⁷

The Marines' agenda included getting the Navy to endorse their Maritime Prepositioning Force (Future) concept, which the Marine Corps saw as the cornerstone for Sea Basing.⁷⁸ To the Navy, the concept was less of a "sea base" than a way to move and quickly assemble a brigade of 14,500 Marines for combat.⁷⁹ The Navy wanted to broaden the definition of sea basing beyond the battlefield to encompass a wider range of missions, such as deterring regional aggressors and protecting allies and friends. As usual, the Marines sought to distill big-picture statements like ...*From the Sea* and *Sea Power 21* down to the tactical level. They sought an a priori understanding of how the two services would fight together, which would yield greater clarity on command relationships and doctrine, which, in turn, shaped decisions on weapons systems, for example. As usual, the Navy resisted attempts at drilling down to the tactical level. Particularly since air power was proving so decisive, the Navy did not want to be unduly bound to concepts and programs that focused on battlefield engagements, which might narrow the fleet's capabilities. Unlike in 1992, when many Navy officers thought the future might well be filled with large-scale amphibious operations and small-scale interventions from the sea, the victory in Enduring Freedom had vindicated the Navy's role as a proficient and decisive instrument of long-range strike warfare. Not surprisingly,

⁷⁷ Swartz, "U.S. Navy Capstone Strategies and Concepts (2001–2010)," 44, slide 88.

⁷⁸ Dossel, email and Commander Paul N. Nagy, U.S. Navy (Ret.), email message to Peter M. Swartz, April 12, 2005.

⁷⁹ Nagy, email, April 12, 2005.

the naval operational concept was euthanized at the three-star level in the spring of 2002.⁸⁰

In the fall of that year, however, the effort was resurrected. The Naval Warfare Development Command took the lead for the Navy. The new head of N51, Rear Admiral Eric T. Olsen (commander of U.S. Special Forces Command, 2007–11), led discussions on special forces' capabilities while the Strategy and Concepts branch (N513) negotiated with the Marines in the final stages. The new effort was a different kind of animal. Jointness was the main theme, since it was to be the Navy-Marine Corps's input to the Joint Operations Concept. Its intent was also to operationalize Naval Power 21 and complement the Naval Transformation Roadmap. The twenty-three-page document, renamed "Naval Operating Concept for Joint Operations," was signed out by CNO Clark and Commandant of the Marine Corps General Michael W. Hagee (2003–06) and published on the Internet in April 2003. They noted it "represents an initial effort of an iterative process to describe how the Navy and Marine Corps will train, organize, deploy, employ, and sustain a more capable and ready force, now through 2002, as part of the Joint Force."⁸¹

The Naval Operating Concept for Joint Operations was a work of consensus, more abstract and far-sighted than its failed predecessors. It fleshed out the four elements of the Sea Strike-Sea Shield-Sea Basing-ForceNet construct, and discussed the rationale behind the Global Concept of Operations. It also examined Army, Air Force, and joint operational concepts in detail and sought to link Navy and Marine Corps visions and concepts with them. It called for more Navy-Marine Corps integration in education, training, experimentation, and research and development, and for an update to *Naval Warfare*: Naval Doctrine Publication 1, which was signed in 1994.

⁸⁰ Dossel, email.

⁸¹ "Naval Operating Concept for Joint Operations," Chief of Naval Operations Admiral Vern Clark and Commandant of the Marine Corps General Michael W. Hagee (Department of the Navy, Office of the Chief of Naval Operations, Washington, DC, October 2003), signature page.

In tone and substance, the difference between the Naval Operating Concept for Joint Operations (which came out in April 2003) and *Sea Power 21* (which was released in June 2002) was great. The Marines' influence was evident, if not preeminent. It had all the markings of the Marines' more measured and grounded Clausewitzian style of strategic thinking, which meant there was little euphoria about the salutary benefits of technology or the need for decisive victory. It discussed the unique ability of naval forces to operate across the spectrum of warfare. With less Beltway jargon, it laid out why naval forces were relevant and how they contributed to American post-9/11 security. It asserted the importance of naval power projection, declaring "the Navy and Marine Corps must continue to operate effectively as a forward-postured, immediately employable force."⁸² The Naval Operating Concept for Joint Operations painted a picture of a strategic environment that demanded a contingent approach and a generic force that was flexible, mobile, and adaptable. That was the same picture the Navy had been painting all through the Cold War, and the kind of approach and force structure the rest of the military had been moving toward since 1989, a state of affairs the Navy seemed unable to point out.

With the Navy Operating Concept for Joint Operations, the naval services were nonetheless implying that joint doctrine—colored as it was by the Army's battlefield-centric notions of prescriptive doctrine and the Air Force's theory of strategic air power—needed to adopt the less kinetically inclined precepts that had traditionally governed naval operations. Joint doctrine needed to adopt the naval services' way of thinking instead of the other way around.

Even so, the Naval Operating Concept for Joint Operations did not stray outside the lines of the Bush administration's strategy and defense policy. The two services made their case on warfighting, deterring wars, and managing crises. "Democracy," "free-trade," and "globalization" did not make appearances. As detailed in his 1999 "A Maritime Strategy for the 21st Century," Rear Admiral Sestak's expansive explanation of

⁸² Ibid., 2.

American sea power—which had related naval purpose in terms of forward presence, regional stability, and the health of the American and global economy—had disappeared.

The Naval Operating Concept had more influence in the Marine Corps than in the Navy. Unlike *Sea Power 21*, Clark did not provide much follow-through. The Navy generated little publicity for it, and in general the concept was swamped by the continuous fanfare about *Sea Power 21*. Institutionally, as Peter Swartz noted, there remained “little [Navy] interest in formal long-range concept development in general, and in conformance to joint concept development processes and definitions in particular.”⁸³ There is little indication it had much influence on joint doctrine, whose relevance and direction would be cast into doubt within the year as the insurgency in Iraq began to expose the limitations of the American approach to war.

J. THE FLEET RESPONSE PLAN

The signature page of the Naval Operating Concept for Joint Operations contained a peculiar word, one that has not been seen in a Navy strategic statement since “The Way Ahead” in 1991. That word was “surge,” a dirty word in the Navy. Surging (i.e., deploying the fleet from its homeports only when needed), contradicted the need for forward deployment. It portrayed the Navy as a garrison service, whereas the Navy’s identity was about doing “real things” in the context of forward operations, as CNO Arleigh Burke had noted.⁸⁴

But the summer of 2002 saw a change in national defense policy that caused the Navy to embrace the concept nonetheless. As the 2002 *National Security Strategy* noted, “A military structured to deter massive Cold War-era armies must be transformed to focus more on *how* an adversary might fight rather than *where* and *when* a war might

⁸³ Swartz, “U.S. Navy Capstone Strategies and Concepts (2001–2010),” 56, slide 111.

⁸⁴ Admiral Arleigh A. Burke, letter to Rear Admiral Walter G. Schindler, May 14, 1958, quoted in David A. Rosenberg, “Arleigh Albert Burke,” *The Chiefs of Naval Operations*, ed. Robert W. Love Jr. (Annapolis, MD: U.S. Naval Institute, 1980), 287.

occur.”⁸⁵ It noted that the military had to scramble as Afghanistan had been low on the list of planning contingencies. And it stated that the Services should be prepared for more of these surged deployments, particularly since 30 percent of overseas bases were going to be shut down.⁸⁶ The military had to prepare for a greater diversity of threats and a much broader set of measures to address them. Added to the 1-4-2-1 construct was the “10-30-30” concept—the military should plan to seize the initiative within 10 days of the start of a war, defeat an enemy within 30 days, and be prepared within another 30 days to shift to another area.⁸⁷

The policy change deemphasized the need for forward presence and exposed the Navy’s inability to surge its carrier strike groups when needed. The change threatened to undermine the Navy’s rationale for a fleet structure that was based on the regional combatant commanders’ respective forward presence requirements. Established in 1990, the Global Naval Force Presence Policy institutionalized the forward presence model that was established during the Cold War, which aimed at providing “ubiquitous” naval presence in all the major theaters.⁸⁸ During the intervening years, the Navy had no reason to change its heel-to-toe deployment rotation cycle model or dispense with its three-hub architecture, both of which had been developed during the Cold War, and were merely adjusted to address regional threats afterwards. In the post-9/11 world, however, ubiquitous presence did not make much sense to the Bush administration, which was more concerned about how the adversary would fight than where. The sizeable U.S. naval forces deployed in the Persian Gulf and western Indian Ocean had not deterred al-Qaeda after all, nor was it clear why they should have. Adhering to “combat-credible forward presence” might spell disaster for the Navy’s force structure.

⁸⁵ *The National Security Strategy*, President George W. Bush (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, September 2002), 29. Emphasis added.

⁸⁶ Rick Maze, “House Committee Saves Plan To Close Some Military Bases,” *Federal Times*, May 19, 2003.

⁸⁷ See Jason Sherman, “10-30-30 Strategic Plan Could Steer Future Force,” *Army Times*, April 26, 2004.

⁸⁸ Captain Joseph F. Bouchard, U.S. Navy (Ret.), email message to Peter M. Swartz, August 25, 2003.

Starting in the summer of 2002, less than a year before the invasion of Iraq in March 2003, the Navy came under increasing fire from the Bush administration for its inability to have more carriers available to surge. After Enduring Freedom, few doubted that the Navy's primary mission was carrier strike warfare. The flip side of the carrier's success was OSD's intense scrutiny of how the Navy employed its carriers, specifically its ability to surge the carrier strike groups, and annoyance with what it perceived to be a lack of urgency on the part of the Navy to make more available. The Navy employed a three-stage, eighteen-month process during which carrier strike groups were either working up for deployment, on deployment, or standing down after deployment. Broadly speaking, at any given moment one of the Navy's twelve carriers was in long-term overhaul, one was permanently forward deployed (based in Japan), two were on deployment, two were in the final stages of work-ups, and the rest were in various stages of standing down or just starting work-ups. As Undersecretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness David Chu noted, "I have four to eight carriers that I can't send anyplace....because they're being overhauled, retrained, etc....There is in the Navy and the Marine Corps a *substantial* portion of structure that is unavailable to the president on short notice, short of heroic measures."⁸⁹ In short, due to OSD's policies, the term "forward deployment" became a dirty one in the Pentagon during these years.

The fall of 2002 thus found Rear Admiral W. Douglas Crowder, the head of Deep Blue, working to increase the availability of carrier strike groups. Taking advantage of the fleet's much improved readiness, which would not have been possible without CNO Clark's single-minded focus on material and manpower readiness, Crowder developed a plan such that six carrier strike groups would be deployable within thirty days and two ready strike groups would be deployable within three months. After deployment, ships and squadrons would be quickly reconstituted and available for redeployment. The old three-stage process of tiered readiness was replaced by one of near-constant readiness,

⁸⁹ Vince Crawley, "Chu Says Readiness Reports are Result of Services' Differences," *Navy Times*, June 24, 2002. Emphasis added.

and required a massive overhaul of resourcing, training, and manning procedures and practices, which again would not have been possible without Clark's new business practices.⁹⁰ With the vastly improved readiness, the Navy was able to employ six carriers in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom and had eight available for the start of hostilities in mid-March 2003.⁹¹ At that time, the Navy had seven of its twelve carrier strike groups underway (one in the Western Pacific), plus ten of twelve amphibious groups, and thirty-three of fifty-four attack submarines.⁹² All told, this represented nearly 70 percent of the fleet deployed.⁹³

Two months after the start of Iraqi Freedom, Admiral Robert Natter, the head of U.S. Fleet Forces Command, released the Fleet Response Plan. It proved highly influential throughout the Navy, and did much to support the need for a twelve-carrier fleet. It was also a big hit with Secretary Rumsfeld, who called it "transformational."⁹⁴ OSD policy-makers also liked the Navy's associated "Flexible Deployment Concept" and "Presence with a Purpose." Developed in part by Captain Joe Bouchard in Deep Blue, the two initiatives adjusted the schedules of deployed naval forces and aligned their activities in accordance with OSD's new Security Cooperation Guidance.⁹⁵ After 9/11, OSD policy-makers had overhauled how the Department of Defense interacted with foreign defense establishments. OSD defined Security Cooperation Guidance as "those activities conducted with allies and friends...[meant] to build relationships that promote specified U.S. interests; build allied and friendly capabilities for self-defense and coalition

⁹⁰ See Swartz, "U.S. Navy Capstone Strategies and Concepts (2001–2010)," 66–68, slides 131–136.

⁹¹ Thom Shanker and Eric Schmitt, "Critics and Fans Alike As Navy Chief Steps Down," *New York Times*, July 17, 2005.

⁹² Vice Chief of Naval Operations Admiral William J. Fallon, testimony to the U.S. House of Representatives, Armed Services Committee, Subcommittee on Military Readiness, 108th Congress, 1st Session, March 18, 2003.

⁹³ Ibid.

⁹⁴ Captain Joseph F. Bouchard, U.S. Navy (Ret.), email message to Peter M. Swartz, June 27, 2005.

⁹⁵ Bouchard, email, August 25, 2003.

operations; [and] provide U.S. forces with peacetime and contingency access.”⁹⁶ The Security Cooperation Guidance informed the regional combatant commanders’ respective Theater Security Cooperation plans, both of which were detailed, metric-based engagement activity plans (i.e., joint exercises, U.S.-funded training and education, high-level talks, and port calls) and assessment tools designed for specific states and regions. The “themes” of Security Cooperation were: “combating terrorism; influencing strategic directions of key powers; transforming the U.S.–Russian relationship; cooperating with parties to regional disputes; supporting realignment of U.S. global posture [i.e., the military’s overseas infrastructure]; and strengthening alliances for the future.”⁹⁷

Within the year, however, the Navy began to backpedal on the concept of surging, claiming that, while the intent of the Fleet Response Plan was to make more ships available for crises, routine deployments were going to continue. The Navy was now on a balancing wire. It had to demonstrate it could surge, but still had to assert the need for continuous forward presence, particularly given the importance of OSD’s Security Cooperation and the regional combatant commanders’ associated presence requirements, which went a long way in justifying the fleet’s size. Vice Admiral Charles W. Moore Jr., deputy CNO for Fleet Readiness and Logistics (N4), noted in February 2004 that a more surge-capable Navy did *not* mean that fewer ships would be on deployment.⁹⁸ “I don’t like to look at presence on one hand, and call it mutually exclusive with the Fleet Response Plan on the other,” echoed CNO Clark in March 2004. “I’m trying to...communicate to Unified Commanders that look, if you are going to have the value of naval forces in your AOR [Area of Responsibility], make it count.”⁹⁹ By the end of 2004,

⁹⁶ “DoD Security Cooperation Guidance,” PowerPoint brief presented by Andrew Heohn, Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense (Strategy) at the Security Cooperation Agency Conference, Washington, DC: October 28, 2003, slide 3, <http://www.dsca.mil/sc2003/Briefings%20&%20Speeches/1st%20Day/Andrew%20Hoehn.ppt>.

⁹⁷ Ibid., slide 4.

⁹⁸ *Inside the Navy*, March 1, 2004.

⁹⁹ Chief of Naval Operations Admiral Vern Clark, “Remarks to the Defense Writers Group” (Washington, DC, March 2, 2004).

there was a clear shift in emphasis away from using surge capacity as a metric and back to routine forward deployments with a more focused approach on presence. It was, at this point, becoming apparent to all in the U.S. military that the future would not be filled with preemptive high-tech wars against the likes of North Korea or Iran. Instead, it would be filled with a military that appeared likely to be mired in a land war in Iraq for a long time.

K. CONCLUSION

The years between 9/11 and late 2004, when American military leadership began to realize that the United States would not be leaving Iraq anytime soon, were arguably the period when prospects for the development of a systemically oriented maritime strategy were at their lowest ebb. The Bush administration's reprisal of the United States' Cold War strategic outlook provided the basis for a new societal consensus oriented around a new global threat—terrorism. And while it was apparent that international terrorist organizations like al-Qaeda lacked the capacity to destroy the United States in a day, they were said to threaten America's way of life and its values, just as the Soviets had done, a reflection, perhaps, of the Cold War administrations' politics of insecurity theme, which, one might argue, is necessary to ensure support from a democratic society. The global war on terror allowed substantial portions of the government to be reorganized to wage a new kind of war. As during the Cold War, it was now difficult to define U.S. interests except with reference to a single dominant threat, recast into a familiar shape.¹⁰⁰ As Vice President Cheney and Secretary of State Powell noted, it was far easier to attack states that sponsored terrorism than terrorists, so the administration made no distinction between the two.¹⁰¹ The mismatch between the nature of the threat and the tools at the government's disposal channeled the conduct of the war on terrorism toward inter-state war. There was little reason to relate the purpose of the U.S. military to

¹⁰⁰ John Lewis Gaddis, *Strategies of Containment: A Critical Appraisal of American National Security Policy During the Cold War* (1982; New York: Oxford University, 2005), 96.

¹⁰¹ Bob Woodward and Dan Balz, "'We Will Rally the World' – Bush and His Advisers Set Objectives, but Struggled With How to Achieve Them," *Washington Post*, January 28, 2002.

American interests in an increasingly inter-dependent, globalizing world beyond what was required to wage that war.

Few in the Pentagon or Congress actually imagined how the global war on terror might be won. Instead, they continued to focus on improving how the military fought. That focus was reinforced by the initial success of Enduring Freedom, which was supposed to have “vindicated” transformation, despite the fact that the nebulous political goals of the campaign had not been achieved, and that there was little novel about the opening stages of the conflict other than the fact that the air power was supplied by one nation and the ground forces by another.¹⁰² The tactical advances demonstrated in Afghanistan and during the invasion of Iraq were the result of evolutionary changes that had been underway since the 1970s. Neither Enduring Freedom nor Iraqi Freedom was “transformational,” a concept that had little meaning other than as a way of discrediting those who dared to oppose the policies of Secretary Rumsfeld.¹⁰³ As Kagan noted, “It was easy enough to argue that anyone who opposed transformation also opposed innovation....And was simply defending some self-serving bureaucratic objective...and that anyone who opposed NCW [Network-Centric Warfare] had not adjusted to the new realities after 9/11.”¹⁰⁴

Few in the Pentagon or Congress stopped to contemplate the apparent mismatch between a high-tech conventional military and an unconventional, amorphous adversary living off of the heat generated by deeply rooted social and cultural resentments. The Revolution in Military Affairs—and by association, “transformation” and network-centric warfare—were ultimately solutions in search of a problem.¹⁰⁵ To quote Kagan, “The history of U.S. military transformation efforts since the end of the Cold War has

¹⁰² Kagan, *Finding the Target*, 310.

¹⁰³ *Ibid.*, 321.

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, 321–322.

¹⁰⁵ *Ibid.*, 355.

been the story of a continuous movement away from the political objectives of war toward a focus on killing and destroying things.”¹⁰⁶

That movement had been fine with the Navy’s post-Cold War leaders. They believed that their responsibility was confined to readiness and resource management. That focus, which was reinforced by the Navy’s profoundly operational outlook, was for the most part vindicated in the opening stages of Enduring Freedom and the invasion of Iraq. Navy leaders had come to believe that achieving political objectives was someone else’s responsibility. Again, strategy is the bridge that connects political goals with military force (and vice versa).¹⁰⁷ Success in strategy depends on the presence of real people to cross it. By assuming the infallibility of decisions by civilian defense leaders and the combatant commanders, Navy leaders abdicated responsibility for crossing that bridge as the nation’s sole representative of the maritime dimensions of American strategy.

CNO Clark arguably did transform the way the Navy was managed. Indeed, one may well argue that he was the most successful of the post-Cold War CNOs. But as with his predecessors, the problem that Clark was trying to solve was not about strategy. He regarded good management as a substitute for good strategy. The immediate goal was to attend to the fleet’s health, without which political goals could not be achieved. On the other hand, the Navy’s innovators and internal critics, like Bill Owens and Art Cebrowski, did not focus on strategy either. They found their substitute in advanced technological solutions to operational problems. The Navy’s post-Cold War intellectual luminaries, namely technocratic visionaries like Owens, did much to encourage the “comfortable and placid acceptance of a single idea, a single and exclusively dominant

¹⁰⁶ Ibid., 358.

¹⁰⁷ Colin S. Gray, *Strategy and History: Essays on Theory and Practice* (London: Routledge, 2006), 77.

military pattern of thought” as Captain J. C. Wylie had warned against, because, among others, it served the Navy’s institutional interests.¹⁰⁸

Like ...*From the Sea* and “2020 Vision,” *Sea Power 21* was a kinetically oriented approach that affirmed power projection in support of major combat operations as the Navy’s primary purpose. It conceived of naval strike warfare as a freestanding political expedient, and proclaimed the inherent advantages of floating, forward deployed precision strike forces. At the same time, *Sea Power 21* faithfully represented the Bush administration’s technocratic and “transformational” defense priorities, which insured that, in practice, some services (i.e., the Air Force and the Navy) were more equal than others. In Enduring Freedom, as in the Korean and Vietnam Wars, carriers had been proven once again to possess unique advantages in speed, sustainability, and flexibility with aircraft every bit as sophisticated as the Air Force’s.

On the whole, then, the post-9/11 world seemed at first glance to be one well suited to reinforce the Navy’s long-standing preferences for a fleet organized around carriers and oriented toward power projection and the prosecution of inter-state war. That shining moment did not last, however. As the quagmire in Iraq deepened, all the familiar certainties and Cold War shibboleths that the global war on terror had seemed, however improbably, to have revived, would once again be cast into doubt.

¹⁰⁸ Captain J. C. Wylie, “Why a Sailor Thinks Like a Sailor,” U.S. Naval Institute *Proceedings* 83, no. 8 (August 1957): 811.

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XI. THE 3/1 STRATEGY, 2005

A. IRAQI FREEDOM: TRANSFORMATION VINDICATED (AGAIN)

September 11th provided the Bush administration with what it saw as an opportunity to serve long-term U.S. interests by installing a democracy in Iraq. President Bush and National Security Advisor Condoleezza Rice saw in the immediate post-9/11 period an era of opportunity not unlike the years just after the Second World War. This was a time when the United States installed the political, economic, and security mechanisms of its international economic and political system, which eventually produced free-market democracies like West Germany and Japan, and, in the aggregate, “a balance of power that favored freedom,” as Bush phrased it.¹ By installing a democracy in Iraq, Bush sought a long-term solution to the chronic instability and social disillusionment of the Middle East, the social and political deficiencies of which had, in the view of his principal advisors, led to Islamic terrorism and threatened the flow of petroleum, the wellspring of the international economy. Campaign planning began in earnest in late 2001. From the start, Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld sought to apply the “lessons” of Enduring Freedom to Iraq. “I’m not sure [400,000 troops are] needed given what we’ve learned coming out of Afghanistan,” he noted in December 2001 to Army General Tommy R. Franks, the head of U.S. Central Command.² The campaign plan reflected this outlook. It relied on precision strike, information dominance, Special Forces, and a lean maneuver force of 145,000 troops.

Like the opening campaign in Afghanistan more than a year earlier, the invasion that followed “vindicated” the administration’s transformation efforts. In particular, it validated a smaller, leaner, and more mobile Army. The invasion force of one Marine, one British, and two Army divisions sliced through Iraq and deposed Saddam Hussein in

¹ White House transcript, “Remarks by National Security Advisor Condoleezza Rice on Terrorism and Foreign Policy,” Paul H. Nitze School of Advanced International Studies, Johns Hopkins University, April 29, 2002, <http://georgewbush-whitehouse.archives.gov/news/releases/2002/04/20020429-9.html>.

² Bob Woodward, *Plan of Attack* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 2004), 41.

three weeks. Major offensive operations ended in late April. The human cost for the United States of these initial operations amounted to only 138 fatalities, fewer than those suffered by Operation Desert Storm's eleven-division coalition force in 1991.

The invasion of Iraq also appeared to validate the direction of post-Cold War U.S. naval strategy, and highlighted the Navy's proficiency in strike-oriented power projection. Over 750 Tomahawk cruise missiles were launched, while the five aircraft carriers' 250 F/A-18 Hornets operated as the campaign's workhorses and their E-2C Hawkeye command and control aircraft unsnarled problems on the fly in the fast-paced drive to Baghdad.³ The campaign also saw unprecedented service integration and appeared once more to have demonstrated the lethality of air power.⁴ There was, at first blush at least, no reason for the Navy to question the direction of *Sea Power 21* released a year earlier.

B. THE WAR EXPOSES THE U.S. STRATEGIC APPROACH

The situation in Iraq began to unravel soon after the invasion. Insurgent attacks mounted and lawlessness increased. Commanders on the ground were clamoring for more troops. They were demanding guidance on how to reconstruct the instruments of governance and reestablish essential social services. After replacing General Franks in July 2003, Army General John Abizaid bluntly contradicted the administration when he declared that the nation was still at war and was confronting a campaign of guerilla insurgency.⁵ All things considered, the adaptation of American ground forces to conditions that, for whatever reasons, their leaders had failed to foresee, was reasonably swift and effective. In the summer of 2004, a new team of Army and State Department leaders implemented a campaign plan based on classic counter-insurgency doctrine—

³ See Stephen Budiansky, "Air War Striking In Ways We Haven't Seen," *Washington Post*, April 6, 2003 and Rebecca Grant, *Battle-Tested: Carrier Aviation in Afghanistan and Iraq* (Washington, DC: IRIS, 2005), 141, 155, and 163.

⁴ Budiansky, "Air War Striking In Ways We Haven't Seen."

⁵ See Thom Shanker, "After the War: U.S. Commander in Iraq Says Yearlong Tours are Option to Combat 'Guerrilla' War," *New York Times*, July 17, 2003.

shelved after the disillusionment of Vietnam, but now dusted off and brought forward with much fanfare—that was applied by the first rotation of soldiers who had pre-deployment counter-insurgency training.

At the same time, as Thomas Ricks noted, “The Army was moving into intellectual opposition to the Bush administration. The Army War College, the service’s premier educational institution, became a leader of dissent during the occupation period, with its analysts issuing scathing reviews.”⁶ The war in Iraq was mercilessly exposing the limitations of the Americans’ reductionist, strike-oriented way of war. The promises of a Revolution in Military Affairs based on the more precise violence of a new generation of weapons were proving empty. The realizations that U.S. “information dominance” and precision strike warfare were insufficient to subdue a patient and adaptive adversary came, however improbably, as a surprise. The real “battlefield,” it turned out, was, as always, psychological, and it could not be rendered “transparent” by technology. With the focus on “killing and destroying things,” as Fred Kagan noted, the military had lost sight of the larger purpose of war.⁷

C. BUSH’S NEW STRATEGIC APPROACH

In March 2004, the Bush administration issued its classified *Strategic Planning Guidance* that sought to close the gap between the military’s current capabilities—which were said to be oriented around interstate war—and the “challenges” from the emerging strategic environment. The aim of the *Strategic Planning Guidance* was to improve capability and reduce risk in three areas: 1) irregular or unconventional warfare; 2) catastrophic attacks on the homeland by weapons of mass destruction; and

⁶ Thomas E. Ricks, *Fiasco: The American Military Adventure in Iraq* (New York: Penguin, 2006), 308.

⁷ Frederick W. Kagan, *Finding the Target: The Transformation of American Military Policy* (New York: Encounter Books, 2006), 358.

3) disruptive breakthroughs in biotechnology, cyber operations, space, or directed-energy weapons, which could negate comparative U.S. advantages in key domains like cyber-space and space.⁸ (See Figure 5.)

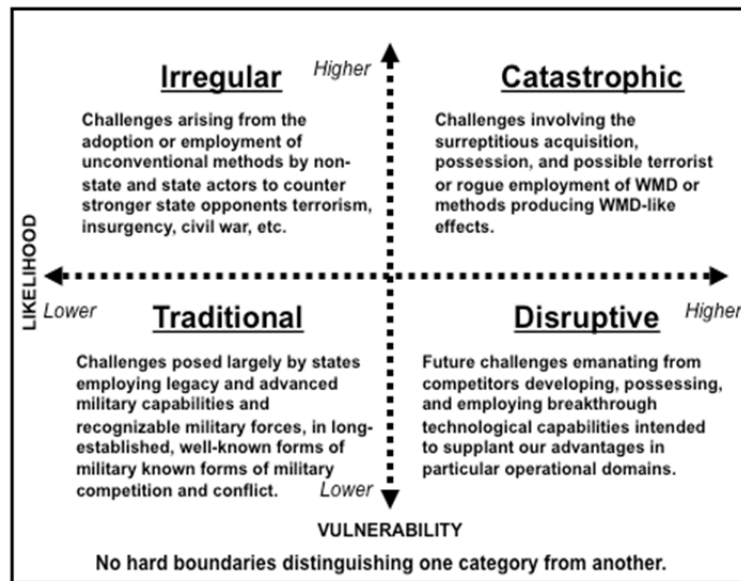


Figure 5. OSD's Quad Chart⁹

In other words, the air had officially come out of transformation. Its talismanic weapons were too expensive. They would not be fielded for years. They were deemed irrelevant to the immediate task at hand, which was to wage campaigns of pacification and counter-insurgency simultaneously in Iraq and Afghanistan. Nevertheless, despite having shifted the lines of strategic argument within the Department of Defense, the new guidance was vague in matters of detail. In particular, it left much to be desired about

⁸ The increased importance of the new threats identified by the *Strategic Planning Guidance* effectively undermined the assumptions of the 2001 QDR's 1-4-2-1 force planning construct.

⁹ There were various versions of the OSD Quadrant Chart. The one pictured is generic. See, for example, "Trends in Security Cooperation," PowerPoint brief presented by Vice Admiral Arthur K. Cebrowski, U.S. Navy (Ret.), Director, Office of Force Transformation, Department of Defense, June 15, 2004, slide 6, http://www.au.af.mil/au/awc/awcgate/transformation/oft_cebrowski_security_challenges.pdf.

how the Services were to reallocate resources from established programs to new ones whose detailed requirements were as yet undefined.

Released in March 2005, the *National Defense Strategy* built upon the foundation laid down by the *Strategic Planning Guidance* and made clear its underlying strategic assumptions. The shock that the United States might fail to get its way in Iraq had brought about a sobering reappraisal of U.S. strategy. Gone were any idealistic notions of spreading free-market democracies. Instead, it saw the United States as the guardian of the international system. It argued for a systemic and collective understanding of America's security, and that of its allies and partners. It was, at that point, the most systemically oriented strategic statement to come out of the Pentagon since the Cold War.

The Bush administration believed that U.S. dominance in high-intensity warfare had forced its enemies to adopt more irregular means to achieve their political goals. It also believed globalization was a catalyst for new threats. "While the security threats of the 20th century arose from powerful states that embarked on aggressive courses," the *National Defense Strategy* declared, "the key dimensions of the 21st century—globalization and the potential proliferation of weapons of mass destruction—mean great dangers may arise in and emanate from relatively weak states and ungoverned areas."¹⁰ The Bush White House had come a long way from the Republicans' globaloney days.

The *National Defense Strategy*'s assumptions were organized around a *strengths-vulnerabilities-opportunities* construct. American *strengths* included a network of alliances and partnerships; the lack of a peer competitor; a military with unmatched traditional capabilities; and other elements of national power such as political, economic, technological, and cultural assets.¹¹ *Vulnerabilities* included the lack of capacity to address global security challenges; the lack of capacity or fortitude among U.S. allies and partners; institutional inertia and resistance to change that inhibited military

¹⁰ *The National Defense Strategy of the United States of America*, Washington, DC: Department of Defense, Government Printing Office, March 2005), 1.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 5.

transformation; and a leading position in international affairs that was liable to breed resentment and resistance.¹² *Opportunities* included the capacity to influence international events to bring about a “new and peaceful state system”; the possibility of deepening security relationships with key partners that shared America’s interest in systemic stability; more international partners seeking integration into the U.S.-led system; and the likelihood that “problem states” would be increasingly “vulnerable to the forces of positive political and economic change.”¹³

The *National Defense Strategy* had four objectives: 1) prevent attacks on the homeland by dissuading, deterring, and defeating enemies by engaging them (“when possible”) “early” and at a “safe” distance; 2) secure “strategic access” to key regions, lines of communication, and the global commons, and otherwise retain global freedom of action, all in order to protect the “integrity of the international economic system”; 3) strengthen and expand alliances and partnerships with like-minded states and improve their ability to defend themselves, which, as it noted, was necessary since “a secure international system requires collective action”; and 4) “establish favorable security conditions” by countering acts against U.S. partners and interests. It noted that “where dangerous political instability, aggression, or extremism threatens fundamental security interests, the United States will act with others to strengthen peace.”¹⁴ It continued, noting, “We will create conditions conducive to a favorable international system by honoring our security commitments and working with others to bring about a common appreciation of threats.”¹⁵

The *National Defense Strategy* presented the Navy with an opportunity to assert its relevance in light of the new strategic approach. The new outlook highlighted the virtues of a forward-deployed Navy, with its ability to address threats far from the

¹² Ibid., 6.

¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ Ibid., 7–8.

¹⁵ Ibid., 8.

homeland, ensure access to petroleum, and maintain global freedom of action. The fact that the new “vulnerabilities” were recognized as potentially arising almost anywhere highlighted the Navy’s constabulary role in deterring conflict, managing crises, and protecting and sustaining the international system. It was, to all appearances, an opportunity to assert that, if the United States was the guardian of the international system, the Navy was its most important instrument. Unfortunately, this was not an argument that Navy leaders were poised to make. They were not paying much attention to the shifts in U.S. strategy. Instead, they were preoccupied with an institutional crisis the likes of which had not been seen since the dark days of the 1970s.

D. AN INSTITUTION IN CRISIS: THE NAVY IN HEAVY SEAS

That crisis arose chiefly from that fact that, by the end of 2004, the United States was engaged in what appeared to be two long-term ground wars, whose implacable requirements had elevated the importance of the Army and the Marine Corps, and called the Navy’s into question. Unlike Vietnam, where its carriers played a visible role, the Navy had not found a similar institutional handhold. In a bewildering reversal of fortunes, the Navy and the Air Force, once the darlings of the Bush administration’s transformation policies, found themselves on the margins. Iraq and Afghanistan were rapidly depreciating the Navy’s hard-won and much-celebrated proficiency in precision strike power projection, most recently advanced only two years earlier in *Sea Power 21*.

The Navy also faced a monumental budget and shipbuilding crisis. To help pay for the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, the Bush administration transferred \$9 billion over the next five years from the Navy’s carrier, submarine, and destroyer program accounts.¹⁶ Meanwhile, many of ships and aircraft that had entered the inventory in the 1970s and 1980s were being retired in advance because their maintenance was proving too expensive. But the Navy could only fund four ships for the fiscal year 2006 budget, five

¹⁶ See Dale Eisman, “Navy’s Changing Tide,” *The (Norfolk, VA) Virginian-Pilot*, March 7, 2005 and Loren Thompson, “Triage Time for Military Modernization,” *Defense News*, March 29, 2004.

for 2007, and what would be three for 2008.¹⁷ Of the four ships funded for 2006, only one was a submarine (which was the average number of submarines funded per year), this in a year when the Chinese navy built eleven.¹⁸

Funding even one of these \$2.5 billion *Virginia*-class submarines was a tall order.¹⁹ Since the Bush administration and Congress insisted that ships be completely financed before construction starts, the Navy could not afford much else in those budget years that funded a submarine or an aircraft carrier.²⁰ Shipbuilding, moreover, had not been among CNO Clark's top five priorities. In terms of the normal budgetary trade-offs between capability, capacity, and readiness, he focused on the latter—both current and future readiness. During his five-year tenure, the fleet had shrunk from 318 to 282 ships, the lowest number since before the First World War.²¹ (See Figure 6.) “Where would we be today if five years ago I made shipbuilding my No. 1 one priority? Where would we be?” Clark wondered, shortly before his retirement in July 2005. “We wouldn’t have been ready [for Enduring Freedom and Iraqi Freedom].”²² Because of Clark’s initiatives, seven of the Navy’s available ten carriers and 55 percent of the fleet overall were able to be deployed at the height of Iraqi Freedom.²³ And, indeed, it is hard to argue that ships should be built if there is no budget to maintain them in a state of combat readiness.

¹⁷ Ronald O’Rourke, “Navy Force Structure and Shipbuilding Plans: Background and Issues for Congress” (Washington, DC: Congressional Research Service, July 15, 2009), 34.

¹⁸ William Matthews, “U.S. Service Secretary Nominees Face Challenges, Tight Budgets,” *Defense News*, October 10, 2005.

¹⁹ Robert A. Hamilton, “Mullen Seen as Extending Olive Branch to the Submarine Force,” *The (New London, CT) Day*, September 14, 2005.

²⁰ Eisman, “Navy’s Changing Tide.”

²¹ Otto Kreisher, “New Navy Leader Sees Bigger Role for Sailors on Shore,” *The (Springfield, IL) State Journal-Register*, October 14, 2005 and O’Rourke, “Navy Force Structure and Shipbuilding Plans,” 33.

²² Thom Shanker and Eric Schmitt, “Critics and Fans Alike As Navy Chief Steps Down,” *New York Times*, July 17, 2005.

²³ Chief of Naval Operations Admiral Vernon E. Clark, testimony to the Senate Armed Services Committee, *Hearing on the Fiscal Year 2005 Department of Defense Budget Request*, 108th Congress, 2nd Session, February 10, 2004.

CNO Clark had intended to use the funds recouped from cost efficiencies and manpower cuts to help pay for weapons systems.²⁴ With more than 60 percent of its \$125 billion annual budget going to payroll costs, Clark had already cut 20,000 sailors since 2001, and planned another 60,000 over the next seven years. For each 10,000 cut, the Navy freed up \$1.2 billion to fund ships and aircraft. As Vice Admiral Lewis W. Crenshaw Jr., deputy CNO for Resources, Requirements and Assessments (N8), noted, “The key to buying things in the future is controlling people costs.”²⁵

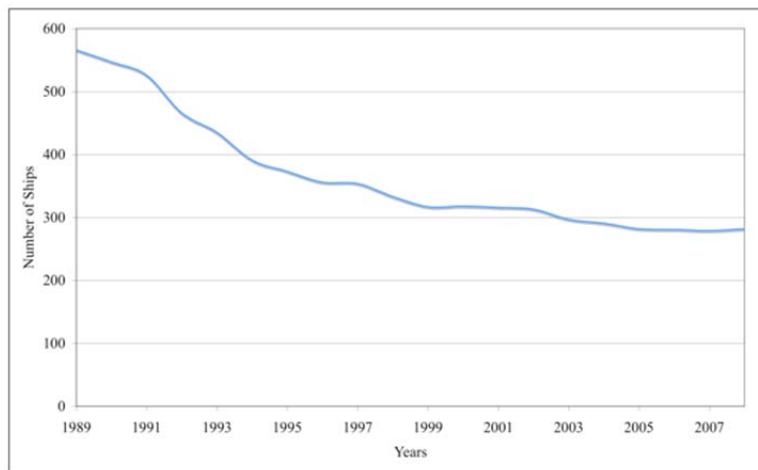


Figure 6. Ships in the U.S. Navy, 1989–2008²⁶

Nevertheless, the savings achieved by reducing manpower paled alongside the costs of the next-generation warships that Clark was now intent on funding. The first of thirty DD(X) destroyers was \$3.3 billion, while the first of nineteen CG(X) ballistic

²⁴ Paragraph based on Shanker and Schmitt, “Critics and Fans Alike As Navy Chief Steps Down”; Eisman, “Navy’s Changing Tide”; and Gina Cavallaro, “A Different Stripe – Some Sailors Are Jumping Ship to Save Their Careers,” *Navy Times*, October 4, 2004.

²⁵ Gopal Ratnam, “Weapons Win Out – As QDR Nears Completion, Services Plan Personnel Cuts to Save Cash,” *Navy Times*, December 26, 2005.

²⁶ Ronald O’Rourke, “Navy Force Structure and Shipbuilding Plans: Background and Issues for Congress” (Washington, DC: Congressional Research Service, August 17, 2010), 31.

missile defense cruisers promised to be even more.²⁷ In all, Clark aimed to triple the shipbuilding budget, and poured vast amounts of research and development funds into these stealthy and ostensibly revolutionary ships, which were not the ship versions of the F/A-18 Super Hornet, which was neither revolutionary nor stealthy, but merely affordable.²⁸

The wars in Iraq and Afghanistan meant that the money Clark had saved was not reinvested. Instead, it went to fund Army and Marine Corps's operations in Iraq. The decision disgusted Navy leaders as the Army, unlike the Navy, had done little to find cost efficiencies even before 9/11. Secretary Rumsfeld had lauded Navy Secretary of the Navy Gordon England's and Clark's managerial skills and their success in "transforming" the Navy more than any other service.²⁹ Nevertheless, the force of events worked against the Navy. Clark summed up the Navy's problems in testimony in early 2005:

Rising operational and overhead costs are competing with my Navy's ability to transform....We are absorbing costs of the war that are not funded....Competing costs are slowing the pace and reducing the scale of [our]...important programs....Shipbuilding and aircraft procurement costs are escalating at an alarming rate and eroding our buying power....And finally, personnel costs continue to rise, especially regarding health care.³⁰

²⁷ Bart Jansen, "A New Threat to BIW's [Bath Iron Works] Future?" *Portland (Maine) Press Herald*, October 27, 2005 and David S. Cloud, "Navy Plans to Expand Fleet, With New Enemies in Mind," *New York Times*, December 5, 2005. "CG" is the Navy's hull classification for cruisers.

²⁸ CNO Clark testified that the DD(X) "is a revolutionary platform, and I believe that, when we have DD(X), it is going to change the way we do everything." Chief of Naval Operations Admiral Vernon E. Clark, testimony to the U.S. Senate, Committee on Appropriations, Subcommittee on Defense, *Hearings on Navy and Marine Corps Appropriations*, 108th Congress, 2nd Session, March 10, 2004.

²⁹ Gregory Platt, "Carrier Viewed as Old and in the Way," (*Jacksonville*) *Florida Times-Union*, January 16, 2005.

³⁰ Chief of Naval Operations Admiral Vernon E. Clark, testimony to the Senate Armed Services Committee, *Hearing on the Fiscal Year 2006 Department of Defense Budget*, 108th Congress, 2nd Session, February 10, 2005.

Given such intractable problems, one can understand Clark's focus on the bottom line. He would need a 20 percent increase in the shipbuilding budget to rebuild the fleet, money he simply did not have.³¹

Money, moreover, was itself no more than a stand-in and symbol for the main issue. "The real challenge to the future of the Navy is relevance," declared a former House Armed Services Committee staffer, who noted lawmakers would wonder why they would need a Navy when U.S.-based bombers could strike targets around the world in hours.³² Americans did not think the Navy was relevant either. A public opinion poll conducted in 1998 had asked people what service should be "built up," and 43 percent said the Air Force, 20 percent the Army, and 17 percent the Navy.³³ When asked in May 2001 which service was the most important to U.S. security, 42 percent chose the Air Force, 18 percent the Army, 15 percent the Navy and 14 percent the Marine Corps. When asked the same question three years later, a year into the war in Iraq, the Army, Marine Corps, and Air Force were essentially tied at 24 percent. The Navy and the Coast Guard came in a distant 9 and 4 percent, respectively.³⁴

On top of all that, the Navy's benefactors in Congress were not happy with Clark.³⁵ They were annoyed with his unwillingness to confront the shipbuilding crisis firmly, at least to the point of declaring decisively how many ships were required—a figure that ranged from 225 to 375 in those years.³⁶ In the summer of 2004, when the search began for the next CNO, it was clear that the Navy's greatest challenge was the

³¹ Ratnam, "Weapons Win Out."

³² Eisman, "Navy's Changing Tide."

³³ "Gallup Poll Quiz: The Gallup Poll: 65 Years of Polling History," www.gallup.com/poll/9970/Gallup-Poll-Quiz.aspx#2 (question 17).

³⁴ Gallup Poll, "Which Branch of the Armed Forces Is Most Important?" *Gallup News Service*, May 27, 2004, www.gallup.com/poll/1666/Military-National-Defense.aspx.

³⁵ See Shanker and Schmitt, "Critics and Fans Alike."

³⁶ See Shanker and Schmitt, "Critics and Fans Alike," Eisman, "Navy's Changing Tide," Christopher P. Cavas, "Full Speed Ahead – Mullen Unleashes 10 Memos on Shipbuilding Review, 'Strategic Plan,'" *Navy Times*, August 22, 2005, and Vago Muradian and Christopher P. Cavas, "Navy May Face Tough Choices," *Navy Times*, October 31, 2005.

shipbuilding crisis. Since CNOs are selected for the skills they bring to bear on the problem at hand, the search inevitably narrowed to those who had a programmatic background, a superb reputation in Congress, and the political skills to leverage scarce funds. As one reporter noted, “The service will need a sustained lobbying effort to convince Congress and voters that ships are a good investment—a major challenge in an era where the Navy has taken a back page in the public mind to the Army and Marines.”³⁷

E. CLARK GARRISONS THE FLEET

Admiral Clark and Vice Admiral Charles W. Moore Jr., the deputy CNO for Fleet Readiness and Logistics (N4), desperately searched for cost efficiencies. “We’re not a business,” noted Moore, “but we ought to run war like a business.”³⁸ This was the mantra of senior Navy leaders throughout Clark’s tenure. One way to do this was to embrace the concept of supply and demand; surging naval forces in response to wartime requirements, but otherwise keeping them close to home in order to stretch available readiness dollars. The 1-4-2-1 force planning construct meant the Navy, having surged its forces to support the invasion of Iraq, had to be ready to surge them again if needed. The massed deployment of carriers in particular had upset the fleet’s routine deployment schedule, and created a potential window of vulnerability that a bold adversary, it was feared, might exploit. As one reporter noted, “With nearly a third of the fleet deployed or returning from wartime service, it may take up to six months before the Navy could deploy a similar force to handle another large-scale contingency, such as operations against a hostile North Korea.”³⁹

³⁷ Ratnam, “Weapons Win Out.”

³⁸ Michael Fabey, “Military Chiefs Looking to Organize, Cut Costs,” (*Newport News, VA*) *Daily Press*, October 28, 2003.

³⁹ James W. Crawley, “Navy Rethinking Deployment Strategy,” *San Diego Union-Tribune*, May 16, 2003.

But that contingency never materialized. The summers of 2003 and 2004 came and went. Ships returned, but were not being redeployed.⁴⁰ Having improved the fleet's readiness and institutionalized the Fleet Response Plan, Clark and Moore grew content to rest on the fleet's ability to surge for major conflict and recoup the operating costs. Clark began to portray the Navy as a rapid-reaction force to be sent out for emergencies.⁴¹ The average number of ships on deployment began to plummet; in time, the Navy would have fewer ships on deployment than before 9/11.⁴² Clark and Moore were garrisoning the fleet, namely because it made good business sense to do so.⁴³

F. MORGAN GRABS THE TILLER

In the summer of 2004, the first of two pivotal figures responsible for the Navy's turn to a maritime-based strategic approach appeared on the scene. This was Vice Admiral John G. Morgan Jr., who took over Plans, Policies, and Operations (N3/N5) in August 2004. In historical terms, his appointment to the traditionally upwardly mobile position was rather implausible. While all but one of his eight post-Cold War predecessors had been promoted to a fourth star (and all but one of three since), Morgan knew coming in that he would not be promoted.⁴⁴ Unlike many of his predecessors, his previous job had not been as a fleet commander, traditionally a prerequisite for a fourth star. Instead, he had been the senior military assistant for Secretary of the Navy England, which meant his appointment smacked of a deal between England and CNO Clark, who was scheduled to retire in a year. Although he had commanded the USS *Enterprise* carrier strike group, Morgan was not considered an "operator" by his peers, unlike his immediate predecessor, Vice Admiral Kevin Greene. In Navy circles, Morgan had been

⁴⁰ Vice Admiral John G. Morgan Jr., U.S. Navy (Ret.), discussion with the author, March 10, 2010, Arlington, VA.

⁴¹ Ibid.

⁴² Ibid.

⁴³ Ibid.

⁴⁴ Ibid.

known as an expert in anti-submarine warfare.⁴⁵ He had stood up the anti-submarine warfare division (N84) in OPNAV in the late 1990s after the Navy realized its capabilities in that warfare area had atrophied. All this meant that Morgan did not have the same level of legitimacy in the eyes of many of the Navy's senior uniformed leaders—its three- and four-star admirals—as did his predecessors.

Outside the confines of the Navy, however, Morgan had gained a reputation as an insightful and creative strategic thinker. While serving under England, one of the most respected free-thinkers in government, Morgan had spearheaded several projects that highlighted the need for new thinking, including the well-received edited work *Rethinking the Principles of War*.⁴⁶ Morgan also had a bachelor's degree in Economics, which enabled him to perceive relationships in geoeconomic terms. His stint as N3/N5 would last an unprecedented four years, the most creative period of naval strategy making since the end of the Cold War.

Morgan had definite plans on where to take American naval strategy.⁴⁷ From his perspective, however, the Navy was in no condition to come about. He believed that since the end of the Cold War, the world had changed fundamentally, while the Navy's ability to think strategically had atrophied beyond much use.⁴⁸ Morgan believed that the Navy lacked what he called a “macro” perspective, which left it confused about the strategic environment and its purpose within it. Morgan often noted that he was a “macro kind of guy.” In OPNAV, he found a dearth of strategic thinking. He declared the Navy needed someone or some organization to step back and provide a broader perspective on both the strategic environment and the Navy's role within it.

⁴⁵ Captain Peter M. Swartz, U.S. Navy (Ret.), discussion with the author, February 18, 2010, Arlington, VA.

⁴⁶ Anthony D. McIvor, ed., *Rethinking the Principles of War* (Annapolis, MD: Naval Institute, 2005).

⁴⁷ Paragraph based on Commander Paul N. Nagy, U.S. Navy (Ret.), discussion with the author, March 4, 2010, McLean, VA and Lieutenant Commander Mark W. Lawrence, discussion with the author, March 3, 2010, Arlington, VA.

⁴⁸ Rest of paragraph based on handwritten notes of Commander Paul N. Nagy of Vice Admiral John G. Morgan Jr.'s comments during the Global N5 Conference, Washington, DC, April 7–8, 2005.

To Morgan, achieving the level of consensus needed to fundamentally change the Navy's long-accustomed course required a pedagogic campaign. He wanted to spark a strategic dialogue in OPNAV, a dialogue that he could shape and manage.⁴⁹ He wanted to put N3/N5 "back on the map" as well as putting the first "P" back into the now renamed "PPBE" (Planning, Programming, Budgeting, and Execution) process.⁵⁰ To make N3/N5 an agent of change, he immediately overhauled the Strategy and Policy Division (N51). He cut excess billets and established new office codes, which meant, for example, that the Strategy and Concepts branch went from N513 to "N5SC" (Strategy and Concepts).⁵¹ Plans, Policies, and Operations became "Information, Plans, and Strategy." All of this was done despite the absence of a clear "demand signal" from the CNO to warrant it.

Even though the war in Iraq had abruptly undermined *Sea Power 21*, Clark had no intention of replacing it.⁵² He gave no orders to Morgan, but evidently gave him considerable latitude, perhaps because of Morgan's prior association with England, for whom Clark had immense respect.⁵³ Clark was not about to show discourtesy to England by reining in Morgan and quashing any of his initiatives, which would probably not amount to much anyway. New CNOs tend to clear the slate and lay down a new set of priorities, which is what Clark had done. As he neared the end of his tenure as CNO, Clark was not looking to saddle his successor with a legacy of incomplete initiatives.

All of this meant that Morgan had a clear road to pursue his agenda for change, which he interpreted as an opportunity to shape the thinking of the next CNO. Given the nature of the Navy's problems, Clark's successor seemed certain to have a background in programmatic, not strategy. Morgan may also have been emboldened by the knowledge

⁴⁹ Morgan, discussion with the author.

⁵⁰ Lawrence, discussion with the author.

⁵¹ Ibid.

⁵² Morgan, discussion with the author.

⁵³ Ibid.

that a fourth star was not in the offing for him. He shared this fact with his officers to emphasize that his disruptive actions were not careerist in nature.⁵⁴

From day one, Morgan told his officers he wanted a *maritime strategy*.⁵⁵ He felt no need to reiterate the Navy's operational virtues to win the hearts and minds of those who controlled the purse strings. Where others saw an intersection of trends that was undermining the Navy's relevance, Morgan saw a different set of trends.⁵⁶ In general, Morgan believed that globalization, the threats from international terrorists, and the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan had elevated the significance of the international system generally.⁵⁷ And it had elevated the need to sustain its orderly functioning against a range of threats like al-Qaeda whose shared characteristic was engrained hostility to—and alienation from—the system itself. Morgan thought globalization had shifted the security calculus toward a greater emphasis on economics, which was the central element around which any maritime (as distinct from naval) strategy was organized, regardless of whether it was exercised in war or peace.⁵⁸ Morgan knew that a globalization-centered strategic approach would essentially be a repudiation of the Bush administration's preemptive go-it-alone policy.⁵⁹ But with globalization, American economic and political interests were increasingly linked to those of other nations. In such an era, trade, commerce, and the accumulation and distribution of wealth among allies became critically important. Consequently, the ability to protect and sustain the international system—the wellspring from which the United States and its allies and trading partners prospered—became critically important as well.

But to Morgan, it was not just about globalization writ large, but the kinds of threats that were emerging from globalization that necessitated a shift from a threat-

⁵⁴ Nagy, discussion with the author and Lawrence, discussion with the author.

⁵⁵ Lawrence, discussion with the author.

⁵⁶ Morgan, discussion with the author.

⁵⁷ Ibid.

⁵⁸ Ibid.

⁵⁹ Ibid.

centric approach to a systemic one.⁶⁰ International terrorist organizations like al-Qaeda did not pose an existential threat to the United States. Unlike the Soviet Union, it could not destroy the United States in an afternoon. However, Al-Qaeda's desire to destroy the system and ability to operate in close proximity to the world's supply of petroleum, and to the maritime choke points through which it flowed, along with most of global trade, made it an indirect threat. The first step in developing a genuinely strategic response (as opposed to merely responding reactively in the wake of attacks) was for the Navy to rethink its required capabilities.

Like many Navy strategists before him, Morgan wanted strategy to shape programmatic decisions instead of the other way around.⁶¹ As he was fond of saying, every one of the Navy's budget submissions *was* a strategy.⁶² The question was whether the strategy reflected an explicit conceptual framework or the budgetary horse-trading that was the inevitable result of treating war as if it were a business. The budget-submission-as-strategy approach that Clark espoused did little to advance the Navy's case in the greater marketplace of ideas, nor did it provide a conceptual framework for the fleet. Every one of the Navy's budget submissions may be a strategy, but they do not speak for themselves.

Morgan was worried about the perception of OSD policy-makers that the Navy was reluctant to engage in the global war on terror.⁶³ The Pentagon was a place where being perceived as relevant was as important as actually being relevant. Clark, despite his joint background, started stiff-arming requests to send Navy forces and personnel overseas to support the war on terror. Morgan's first problem was thus to overcome Clark's reluctance to get the Navy more involved in the war on terror.

⁶⁰ Ibid.

⁶¹ Ibid.

⁶² Ibid.

⁶³ Paragraph based on Morgan, discussion with the author.

Morgan believed that while al-Qaeda constituted the immediate threat to U.S. security, the costs of the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan represented the long-term threat.⁶⁴ Like the Vietnam War, America's protracted and inconclusive engagements overseas were proving costly to its political and economic power. The staggering debt loads incurred to pay for the campaigns threatened the United States' long-term ability to fund a military to protect the homeland and the stability of the system, and sustain the system's motor, which was the U.S. economy. Morgan understood that Americans were becoming war weary. After the war, they would have no stomach for an expensive and hortatory threat-centric approach of the sort President Bush had adopted to mobilize public opinion after 9/11.⁶⁵ As Morgan noted, the opposite of a threat-centric approach was a systemically oriented one that sought to prevent war.⁶⁶ And the challenge of China, he argued, was far too complex than that of a threat.⁶⁷

For Morgan, the fact that the Navy had only a modest share in the current fighting in Afghanistan and Iraq represented an opportunity to shift the terms of the United States' strategic debate.⁶⁸ Yet another proclamation of the decisiveness of naval strike warfare would only demonstrate to those in OSD and Congress that the Navy was hidebound and unable to grasp the new requirements of U.S. strategy. A maritime strategy would put the efforts of the Marine Corps and the Army into a wider perspective in a way that did not impugn their efforts, nor seek to claim undue credit for them. Politically, it was a way to assert the Navy's relevance without explicitly calling those wars and their costs into question. Morgan knew that the world was heading in a direction defined by globalization and wanted to fit the Navy into a world that had been evolving as such since before 1989.⁶⁹ He wanted a strategy that would place the Navy in an advantageous position in

⁶⁴ Ibid.

⁶⁵ Ibid.

⁶⁶ Ibid.

⁶⁷ Ibid.

⁶⁸ Ibid.

⁶⁹ Ibid.

advance of the inevitable moment when the wars ended and the national debate about how to recapitalize the military and what the new U.S. strategic approach should be would be taken up in earnest.⁷⁰ He was, he said, “shooting ahead of the duck.”⁷¹

One thing kept Morgan awake at night, however.⁷² Everything—the rationale for a maritime strategy, the recognition that the Navy had a special relationship with the international system and played a key role in its maintenance, the ability of the Navy to use its unique cross-spectrum capabilities and demonstrate its systemic effects, the size of the fleet, and the Navy’s day-to-day relevance—depended on *forward deployment*.⁷³ Morgan believed Clark’s move to garrison the fleet was a “strategic mistake.”⁷⁴ A garrisoned fleet could not manage crises, provide systemic stability, and otherwise deter expensive, large-scale conflicts. Only when the fleet was built to handle just about any contingency—including those associated with the post-9/11 strategic environment—and was forward deployed could the benefits of American sea power be fully realized and rationalized.

Garrisoning the fleet invited criticism that the Navy was not “getting it,” that its leaders were more concerned about the fleet’s readiness and fiscal health than about supporting the new kind of fight in which the nation found itself engaged.⁷⁵ Knowing that prohibitively high debts and expensive land campaigns had brought about the decline of the Spanish, French, and British navies in the seventeenth, eighteenth, and twentieth centuries, respectively, Morgan was not about to let the Navy and the United States launch themselves down the same unrecoverable glide slope.⁷⁶

⁷⁰ Ibid.

⁷¹ Ibid.

⁷² Ibid.

⁷³ Ibid.

⁷⁴ Ibid.

⁷⁵ Ibid.

⁷⁶ Ibid.

G. MORGAN ADVANCES A NEW STRATEGIC INITIATIVE

Once in office, Vice Admiral Morgan focused on strategy, not operations. The role of OPNAV's "operations officer" was one toward which many who had headed N3/N5 had naturally gravitated. Morgan handed day-to-day operational responsibilities to his two-star deputy, Rear Admiral John D. Stufflebeem, and turned instead to the task of sparking a dialogue in OPNAV about developing a new strategic initiative that was conceived along new and less parochially operational lines.⁷⁷

To head the Strategy and Policy Division (N51), Morgan brought in Rear Admiral Charles W. Martoglio.⁷⁸ They were a formidable team. Martoglio, who was also a surface officer, was not only a brilliant strategic thinker and administrator, but was bureaucratically savvy as well. He had gained invaluable knowledge of backroom Navy politics while serving as the executive assistant to the vice CNO and to the commander of U.S. Fleet Forces Command. He knew how to peddle potentially controversial initiatives to the deputy CNOs and division directors, who were the caretakers of embedded billion-dollar programs, and therefore jealously guarded their turf.

In November 2004, Morgan and Martoglio were ready to present the outlines of their initiative. Their concept was based on a Venn diagram that Martoglio and Morgan had drawn up, which was colloquially known as the "Bear Paw" because it resembled a bear's paw print.⁷⁹ (See Figure 7.)

⁷⁷ Ibid.

⁷⁸ Ibid.

⁷⁹ Nagy, discussion with the author.

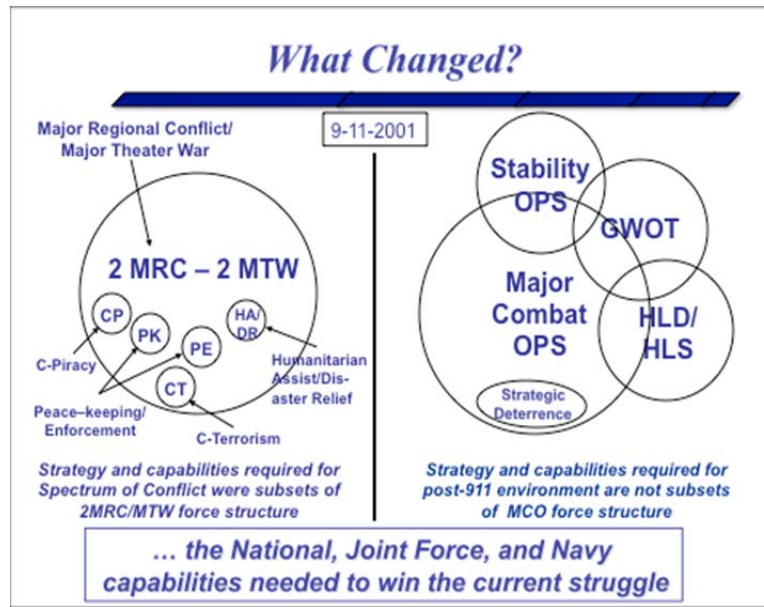


Figure 7. The Bear Paw⁸⁰

Martoglio showed the diagram to CNO Clark, who liked it, and immediately showed it to Secretary England.⁸¹ Clark wanted to use it for his upcoming congressional testimony to explain how the Navy was contributing to the war on terrorism.⁸² As Clark reportedly stated, “We need to think about the enemy that we have...not the enemy we wish we have.”⁸³ For Clark, the Bear Paw was an easily grasped concept that could be used to organize his post-9/11 resource initiatives, like the Navy’s riverine force. For Morgan, the concept was a way to get Clark to ungarrison the fleet and to support the war on terror to a far greater degree. Given Clark’s general approval, Martoglio began presenting the brief to audiences in OPNAV and (possibly unbeknownst to Clark) to local think tanks. In January 2005, Clark officially introduced the 3/1 Strategy at the annual Surface Navy Association Symposium in Washington, DC. Several high-profile

⁸⁰ “Navy’s 3/1 Strategy: The Maritime Contribution to the Joint Force in a Changing Strategic Landscape,” draft paper, version April 12, 2005, 4.

⁸¹ Nagy, notes of Morgan’s comments.

⁸² Lawrence, discussion with the author.

⁸³ Nagy, notes of Morgan’s comments.

workshops on the 3/1 Strategy were held in March and April 2005, the result of a collaborative effort by Morgan and the hosting think tanks.

By this time, Morgan had sent versions of the brief to various senior Navy leaders, along with an accompanying paper by Commander Paul Nagy from N5SC, which was designed to flesh out the presentation. He also sent it to Admiral Mike Mullen, the commander of U.S. Naval Forces Europe, since there was widespread expectation that Mullen was going to be the next CNO.⁸⁴ Mullen, a surface officer, had a background that was profoundly programmatic in nature, perhaps more so than any CNO before or since. He had served as CNO Jay Johnson's director of Surface Warfare (N86), where he had gained a reputation for being a forceful and skillful advocate of the surface navy (and was not known as a friend of naval aviation). Later, he became Clark's deputy CNO for Resources, Requirements and Assessments (N8), and after that his vice CNO. A 1968 Naval Academy graduate with a master's degree in Operations Research from the Naval Postgraduate School, Mullen was very much his own man.

Mullen blossomed intellectually during his tour as commander of U.S. Naval Forces Europe.⁸⁵ Given that he basically had no ships to command, he had to find more nuanced ways to advance U.S. security policy. He grew to appreciate so-called "soft power," particularly through personal relationships.⁸⁶ He worked closely with officials from other nations, U.S. federal agencies, and international organizations, governmental and non-governmental alike. "We do very little anymore as a solitary service at sea," Mullen stated. "If the war on terror has taught us nothing else, it is that the future of national and international security lies in mutual cooperation, jointness and interoperability. Nobody goes it alone."⁸⁷ Mullen's experiences profoundly reshaped how

⁸⁴ Nagy, discussion with the author.

⁸⁵ Swartz, discussion with the author.

⁸⁶ "Soft power" is understood as the shaping the behavior of other states via more indirect and less kinetic means. See Joseph S. Nye Jr., *Soft Power: The Means to Success in World Politics* (New York: PublicAffairs, 2004), 5–11.

⁸⁷ "Mullen Nominated for CNO," *U.S. Fed News*, March 2, 2005.

he thought about the world in a way that complemented Morgan's maritime-based approach. Given his profoundly programmatic background, few in the Navy could have expected that Mullen would acquire a maritime perspective, particularly so late in his career. By all accounts, Mullen, because of his programmatic background, was being chosen as the next CNO to fix the daunting shipbuilding problem; few could have predicted his transcendent conversion and subsequent advocating of a maritime orientation. Mullen evidently pored over the draft paper that Morgan had sent him. Reportedly, he commented that it was the best intellectual piece to have come out of N3/N5 in years.⁸⁸ By that time, Morgan's initiative had acquired a new name, the "3/1 Strategy."

H. THE 3/1 STRATEGY

The 3/1 Strategy held that the security environment had changed on 9/11, and again as a result of U.S. operations in Iraq and Afghanistan—an oblique reference to the economic and political costs of the United States' increasingly unpopular war in Iraq.⁸⁹ The new environment meant the military had to prepare for contingencies that were more diffuse and complex than in the past.⁹⁰ The nation faced a diverse set of enemies that, as it noted, posed a "challenge every bit as threatening as the Soviet Union."⁹¹ Apart from hostile nuclear-armed states, these included international terrorists, advanced weapons proliferators, drug and crime syndicates, and cyber criminals. In contrast to the enemies of "yesterday," "today's" were networked, dynamic, unpredictable, diverse, fluid, and evolving constantly.⁹² They could obtain weapons of mass destruction on the black

⁸⁸ Nagy, discussion with the author.

⁸⁹ "Navy's 3/1 Strategy," 6.

⁹⁰ Ibid., 7.

⁹¹ Ibid., 6.

⁹² Ibid., 7.

market. They “thrived” in the murky areas between crime and armed conflict.⁹³ Many were said to be part of the war on terrorism, which was the Department of Defense’s highest priority.

The 3/1 Strategy embraced the Bush administration’s argument that the global war on terror would be a long struggle. “One way to think about the GWOT [Global War on Terror] is not as a war,” it noted, “but a long-term struggle against a committed ideological opponent, similar to the Cold War against Soviet-inspired Communism.”⁹⁴ In other words, the conflict could not be waited out by those who might think the Navy did not need to change its capabilities.

The basic requirement of the new environment was captured in the Bear Paw slide. In addition to the enduring need to be prepared for major combat operations, the 3/1 Strategy argued for the existence of three new mission sets that required specialized capabilities—the Global War on Terror, Stability Operations, and Homeland Security and Defense. The slide portrayed the relationship between the Navy’s capabilities and missions before and after 9/11. Before 9/11, the two-regional-war construct drove the military’s shape, size, and posture. As the slide noted, the “Strategy and capabilities required for the Spectrum of Conflict were subsets of 2 MRC/MTW [Major Regional Conflict/Major Theater War] force structure.”⁹⁵ The requirements of the post-9/11 environment had undermined the two-regional-war construct such that the “capabilities required for [the] post-9/11 environment are *not* subsets of MCOs [Major Combat Operations].”⁹⁶ In other words, the Navy could no longer accept the inefficiencies that came with using high-end platforms for so-called “lesser included” missions such as counter-terrorism, counter-piracy, peacekeeping, and humanitarian relief. These missions

⁹³ Ibid.

⁹⁴ Ibid.

⁹⁵ Ibid., 4.

⁹⁶ Ibid. Emphasis added.

were now critical to winning the war on terror, and needed to be addressed directly in their own terms.

The 3/1 Strategy argued the Navy needed a strategy that balanced traditional capabilities against the requirements for the three emerging mission sets.⁹⁷ It noted that the Navy's core strengths included the ability to aggregate and disaggregate combat power, and to transition rapidly between missions associated with the war on terror and major combat operations.⁹⁸ Although the war on terror dominated the fleet's day-to-day activities, the force still had to be ready to fight a major war and dominate the high end of the spectrum of warfare with little notice.⁹⁹ But revealing its true colors, the 3/1 Strategy noted, "As the Nation's experiences in the GWOT illustrate, there is more to 'warfare' in the new strategic environment than just MCOs [Major Combat Operations]."¹⁰⁰

In asserting the Navy's unique abilities in the new strategic context, the 3/1 Strategy noted,

The Navy's existing agility enables it to match a broad range of missions and situations....[Its] forward posture is key to its speed of effect and persistent presence....Because Naval Forces are free to operate without the political constraints that often hinder land-based forces, the Navy-Marine Corps Team may provide the Joint Force Commander with military options during a crisis not otherwise available.¹⁰¹

In short, the virtues of the Navy could be fully realized in relation to both its old and its new missions, but *only* when it was forward deployed.

The 3/1 Strategy noted that foreign governments that feared domestic political backlash from too close an association with the United States were far more accepting of the presence of U.S. naval forces in their vicinity than U.S. military forces (and their

⁹⁷ Ibid., 2.

⁹⁸ Ibid., 35.

⁹⁹ Ibid., 2, 32, and 34.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid., 4–5.

¹⁰¹ Ibid., 13.

invariably large-footprint installations) on their soil. U.S. naval forces had “persistent presence,” a minimal footprint ashore, and operated “over the horizon.”¹⁰² Naval forces were also unique in offering an off-shore and single-source capability to train regional forces at sea, in the air, and on the ground to help foreign governments provide for their own security—a critical goal of OSD’s theater security cooperation plan.¹⁰³ Above all, the 3/1 Strategy argued for a systemic understanding of the war on terror. It noted that its main theater of operations had an enormous maritime and littoral dimension. (See Figure 8.)



Figure 8. The Extremist Insurgents’ Area of Concentration¹⁰⁴

It contained six of the world’s busiest sea transit choke points (circles) and most of the world’s petroleum reserves (hour glasses). The collocation of the world’s greatest oil reserves with the international Islamic fundamentalist insurgency was problematic: “If

¹⁰² Ibid., 16.

¹⁰³ Ibid.

¹⁰⁴ Ibid., 9.

stability in this region is in the interest of most of the world,” it noted, “chaos and anarchy serve the objectives of our terrorist adversaries.”¹⁰⁵ Regardless of whether some nations believed the Americans had turned the global war on terror into a crusade, the war had a systemic dimension that could not be ignored. By shutting down access to petroleum and trade, small, widely dispersed, and unpredictable bands of terrorists threatened the stability of the international system as a whole, upon which the United States and its allies and trading partners relied for their economic prosperity. In a globalizing, more interdependent world where U.S. interests are increasingly linked to those of other nations, the United States needed a strategic approach that placed the system’s security requirements at its core. In essence, for the United States, “national” and “systemic” security were so subtly intertwined as to be indistinguishable in practice. The surest way to defend the vital interests of the United States lay in recognizing the intimacy of that relationship. The military’s purpose should accordingly be viewed in relation to systemic requirements.

Within this context, the U.S. Navy had a unique role to play in protecting the system and sustaining globalization. Its role as the systemic constable was said to be analogous to that of the British Royal Navy in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.¹⁰⁶ It declared that the seas are a “vast, ungoverned area.... [and] imposing order over this lawless domain is a ‘public good’ or global responsibility that has traditionally been assumed by the world’s reigning maritime power.”¹⁰⁷ What came next was a surprise—the admittance that “The U.S. Navy cannot accomplish this alone, however. This mission requires the active support and participation of regional nations and their maritime forces.”¹⁰⁸ America’s own strategic interests thus required the Navy to take a “leadership

¹⁰⁵ Ibid., 10.

¹⁰⁶ Ibid., 15.

¹⁰⁷ Ibid.

¹⁰⁸ Ibid.

role” in developing maritime partnerships to rid the seas of lawlessness and terrorist activities.¹⁰⁹

The 3/1 Strategy portrayed the Navy as an instrument that could knit together the interests of the United States with its allies and partners in a way the other U.S. military services could not. Getting allies and partners to provide their own maritime security served everyone’s collective interests, and it left the shrinking U.S. fleet to operate where it would be most effective. The U.S. Navy did not need to be everywhere, just where it mattered.

The 3/1 Strategy framed the Navy’s Maritime Domain Awareness initiative as an essential element of the Navy’s constabulary role.¹¹⁰ Its purpose was to generate “actionable intelligence” on seaborne threats to the United States and its allies and partners. It entailed collecting, fusing, and disseminating information and intelligence supplied by the military, the Coast Guard, the Central Intelligence Agency and other federal agencies, as well as by allies, coalition partners, and commercial entities. As means to cohere a maritime-based network of navies, the gathering and sharing of tactical information now had a strategic dimension.

The discussion of Homeland Defense reiterated the Bush administration’s assertion that the military protected the homeland by conducting offensive operations overseas against terrorist networks, sharing intelligence, and executing “maritime defense” operations; and, when directed, by providing support to civil authorities.¹¹¹ The 3/1 Strategy echoed the *National Defense Policy*’s call for the military to take an active, layered, and scalable approach to defending the United States and its interests.

This was, evidently, an argument for a forward-deployed fleet. But it also provided a new basis for partnership with the Coast Guard, which was responsible for

¹⁰⁹ Ibid.

¹¹⁰ Ibid., 16.

¹¹¹ Ibid., 23.

guarding the maritime approaches to the United States. The Navy, for its part, would keep its forces in readiness to “rapidly augment the Coast Guard” when needed.¹¹² This represented a modest but palpable strengthening of a relationship that had traditionally been cordial, but distant. The Navy-Coast Guard relationship had always been marked by mutual respect based mainly on the natural bond between sailors. The 3/1 Strategy now spoke explicitly of “The Navy/Coast Guard Team,” comprising the “Sea Services” whose task was to “work together seamlessly to protect the American Homeland.” It was a distinctly strong choice of words, given that the “sea services” had traditionally meant the Navy and the Marine Corps.

Stability Operations also loomed large in the 3/1 Strategy. Stability operations highlighted the Navy’s unique ability to protect and stabilize the system by managing crises and deterring conflict. To those in OSD, stability operations meant military operations that maintained or reestablished order, promoted stability, and shaped relations with other nations.¹¹³ The Army defined it narrowly as those operations associated with post-invasion stabilization and reconstruction efforts. The Navy, however, took a much broader view, since an expansive understanding allowed it to demonstrate its usefulness both before and after major conflict. As the 3/1 Strategy pointed out, “The wide range of operations and missions the Navy has conducted in the Arabian Gulf for over twenty years can also be considered Stability Operations as they promoted stability in an often-troubled region.”¹¹⁴ This assertion also allowed the Navy to highlight its role in conventional deterrence. “Perhaps the most important aspect of Stability Operations for the Navy,” it noted, “are those that are intended to deter and/or dissuade regional actors from initiating Major Combat Operations.”¹¹⁵ The 3/1 Strategy contrasted the lesser costs of a large, forward deployed Navy operating as an off-shore balancer to deter war against

¹¹² Ibid.

¹¹³ Ibid., 19.

¹¹⁴ Ibid.

¹¹⁵ Ibid.

the presumably far greater costs (both fiscal and human) that were incurred anytime the ground services were deployed. “The proactive costs of our Nation’s defense,” it noted, “are dramatically more affordable than the reactive costs of going to war.”¹¹⁶

The Navy’s stability operations were said to include sanctions and embargo enforcement, peacekeeping, anti-piracy operations, drug enforcement, supporting counter-terrorism and counter-insurgency operations, enforcement of maritime agreements, and patrolling oil and gas fields. It noted, “Sometimes known as ‘constabulary functions,’ these are critical to upholding international law and promoting regional maritime security initiatives.”¹¹⁷ Never before in a Navy strategic statement had the Navy’s constabulary role enjoyed such a prominent place alongside its other two roles of warfighting and diplomacy.

The 3/1 Strategy noted the Navy was contributing to stability operations on land as well. To free-up Marines and soldiers for combat roles, the Navy had at any one time 7,000 of its personnel in Iraq and Afghanistan, a number that would grow in time to 10,000. The number of Navy personnel deployed on land around the world was increasing. These included medical and dental officers, linguists, cargo and fuel handlers, port security personnel, Maritime Security Detachments, Seabees, Judge Advocate General Corps officers, and Explosive Ordnance Disposal personnel. And they included SEALs, whose stature as a warfare community, particularly in the public eye, threatened to rival that of the air, surface, and subsurface communities, which was owed to the wholesale increase in the operational requirements for Special Operations Forces’ capabilities. To many in the Navy, the definition of the “fleet” was changing. It was encompassing a wide variety of land-based activities and population-centric missions. The basis of the Navy’s knowledge—its operational experiences—was changing and expanding with it.

¹¹⁶ Ibid., 22.

¹¹⁷ Ibid., 19.

The 3/1 Strategy also introduced the Sea Shaping pillar, which reflected the belief of many Navy leaders that the nature of American sea power was expanding. The tipping point was the Navy's disaster relief efforts off of western Indonesia following the earthquake and tsunami in December 2004, which killed nearly 200,000 in Indonesia alone.¹¹⁸ The Navy had immediately dispatched a carrier strike group that was on its way to the Middle East and an expeditionary strike group, which became the nucleus of a massive sea-based relief effort. The United States' efforts dramatically shifted public opinion in Indonesia, the world's largest Muslim country, in favor of the United States and against al-Qaeda.

The surprising strategic effects of the operation reshaped how many Navy leaders understood the Navy's purpose. The new outlook was reinforced in August 2005, when the Navy provided humanitarian assistance after hurricane Katrina. The economic impact of the closure of the port of New Orleans, the nation's largest and the world's fifth largest port, also highlighted the need to protect the world's seventeen mega-port complexes from terrorist attacks, an inference that further strengthened the conceptual tie between the Navy and the international economy.

The 3/1 Strategy was intended in part to identify capability gaps.¹¹⁹ However, it failed to specify what new weapons systems were needed. Only general capabilities were offered. These included naval coastal warfare units, linguists, intelligence officers, medical officers, and security forces, as well as more SEALs and Navy Foreign Area Officers, the latter being officers who had language skills and knowledge of cultural and religious factors, regional politics, and trade issues.¹²⁰ The 3/1 Strategy acknowledged that since the Navy's budget would not increase, any new capabilities would come at the expense of traditional ones. "The Navy must accommodate the demand of the new mission sets," it noted, "from within its existing and planned force structure, with the

¹¹⁸ Morgan, discussion with the author.

¹¹⁹ "Navy's 3/1 Strategy," 44 and 45.

¹²⁰ *Ibid.*, 21–22.

addition of some new, modified, or expanded capabilities that do not currently exist.”¹²¹ In other words, Morgan was attempting to rebalance the fleet structurally and conceptually.

I. PUSHBACK: PART I

Inevitably, the 3/1 Strategy proved controversial. Vice Admiral Joe Sestak, the deputy CNO for Warfare Requirements and Programs (N6/N7), did not like it.¹²² Neither did Admiral Black Nathman, the head of U.S. Fleet Forces Command. A fighter pilot and test pilot, Nathman had been the first the commander of U.S. Naval Air Forces (a.k.a the “Air Boss”), a billet established by Clark in 2001. As such, he directed how naval aviation had prepared for Enduring Freedom, and was well aware of the reasons for carrier aviation’s success particularly in the opening months of that conflict. Before taking over U.S. Fleet Forces Command, Nathman had been the vice CNO, a job whose responsibilities lay in understanding capability requirements and explaining the Navy’s weapons system programs. Before that, he had been the deputy CNO for Warfare Requirements and Programs (N6/N7), a position that made him OPNAV’s advocate for future requirements and fleet readiness. In other words, few other admirals in the Navy had a background that afforded a greater understanding of what the geographic combatant commanders and their respective Navy component commanders were demanding than did he. Neither CNO Clark, Vice Admiral Morgan, nor, for that matter, CNO Mullen, had the benefit of Nathman’s perspective.

The 3/1 Strategy irritated Nathman.¹²³ From his perspective, no one in OPNAV seemed to understand that the fleet and its high-end platforms had been adapting, and adapting well to the post-9/11 challenges, *including* the lesser included missions.¹²⁴ In

¹²¹ Ibid., 44–45.

¹²² Nagy, discussion with the author.

¹²³ Admiral John B. Nathman, U.S. Navy (Ret), discussion with the author, May 5, 2010, Alexandria, VA.

¹²⁴ Ibid.

general, he found the silence from OPNAV about the virtues of the Navy's high-end capabilities deafening.¹²⁵ Influenced by the subtleties of Washington's shifts in policies, OPNAV was not interested in using empirical evidence to highlight the Navy's high-end, multi-mission capabilities. Instead, the 3/1 Strategy, with its focus on the Global War on Terror, Stability Operations, and Homeland Defense, was pandering to the Bush administration's new concepts while patently ignoring operational realities. In an apparent attempt to help catch the shifting winds of U.S. strategy with its ascendant Big Ideas about counterinsurgency and counterterrorism, the 3/1 Strategy was needlessly distancing the Navy from carrier power projection and naval strike warfare, and thereby endangering such capabilities. In terms of its language, Nathman had good reason to be alarmed; the 3/1 Strategy devalued the carriers and naval strike warfare in general like no other of the Navy's post-Cold War strategic statements. In the 10,000-word document, for example, the term "carrier" appeared only five times, all of which appeared in the phrase "Carrier Strike Group," which itself was always used with the term "Expeditionary Strike Group."

Nathman believed it was operationally and politically dangerous to downplay the Navy's blue-water capabilities.¹²⁶ Morgan was painting a much smaller, much more niche-oriented Navy than what was required.¹²⁷ To Nathman, Morgan was making the term "blue water"—which was already a pejorative one among the other services, signifying a preoccupation on the part of the Navy on high-end power projection and open-ocean sea control despite the lack of a naval threat—pejorative inside the Navy, too.¹²⁸ From Nathman's view, despite the emphasis on irregular warfare that had come to dominate the public discussion of American strategy, such high-end capabilities were still

¹²⁵ Ibid.

¹²⁶ Ibid.

¹²⁷ Ibid.

¹²⁸ Ibid.

very much in demand from the real arbiters of military capabilities requirements—the geographic combatant commanders.

Nathman's view of the future, once America's current strategic commitments had been unwound, contrasted sharply with Morgan's. The end of the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq would mark the start of the cuts to the defense budget. The United States was closing many of its overseas bases. Internationally, it was becoming politically unpopular. Foreign governments were refusing to host U.S. forces on their soil.¹²⁹ Americans were war weary, and would not support interventions or large defense budgets. China, North Korea, and Iran were acting up. The Chinese were building a technologically advanced anti-access and area-denial navy that would put a premium on the U.S. Navy's blue-water capabilities.¹³⁰ Given the looming post-conflict budget cuts, the Navy could not afford capabilities that merely demonstrated that the Navy was conforming to political guidance.¹³¹ To Nathman, whose way of thinking reflected those of power-projection proponents of the 1970s like CNOs Holloway and Hayward, only a fleet built around the requirements for major combat operations could manage crisis, deter war, and failing that, to prevail in a wider variety of scenarios. No one denied the need to address the emerging missions. But specialized platforms built for niche missions were not versatile enough across the spectrum of warfare. In a period of fiscal restraint and recapitalization, the Navy needed to spend its limited funds on flexible, multi-purpose platforms built foremost around the requirements of major combat operations, which could be rationalized to Congress, for example, with greater effect, particularly in terms of a threat, and more easily than those more abstract arguments of a constabulary nature. In a real sense, Nathman was, in Morgan's words, also "shooting ahead of the duck."

¹²⁹ Ibid.

¹³⁰ Ibid.

¹³¹ Ibid.

To Nathman, the Navy's high-end, blue water capabilities were the nation's most effective and cost-efficient instrument to manage crises and protect U.S. interests.¹³² What would the United States' "Big Stick" be after the wars? The B-2, which flew from its base in Missouri? The United States' inter-continental ballistic missiles? Even as the United States' focus was on Iraq and Afghanistan, carrier strike groups were steaming off China and North Korea with a view to deterring them from doing anything imprudent. Under no circumstances, Nathman argued, should the Navy exchange even one Super Hornet for squadron of rubber riverine boats.¹³³ Passionately, Nathman fought back at every opportunity. He argued that there was no reason why the three smaller circles of the Bear Paw should be anywhere but inside the larger one. He even got OPNAV to admit one should not be concerned with the size or the positions of the three circles.¹³⁴ He scrambled to ensure other senior admirals understood what was going on and what was at stake.

In the end, Clark did not sign the 3/1 Strategy. He was due to retire in July 2005 anyway, and it was clear that Admiral Mullen, who had been announced as Clark's successor in March 2005, had his own ideas about where he wanted to take the Navy. Although Morgan got his strategic dialogue, for all practical purposes Nathman won the skirmish. What Nathman did not know was that this would prove to be the first in a series of clashes between him and Morgan that would color the landscape of American naval strategy making over the next two years.

J. CONCLUSION

The Bush foreign policy was an unusually aggressive strain of Wilsonianism, the belief that U.S. security interests are best served by increasing the number of liberal

¹³² Paragraph based on Nathman, discussion with the author.

¹³³ Ibid.

¹³⁴ Nagy, notes of Morgan's comments.

democracies.¹³⁵ The administration had an unfailing belief in the centrality of military power in international politics and in its ability to bring real change, which was buoyed by the promises of “revolutionary” technologies. After Iraq exposed the limitations of U.S. strategic approach and the self-indulgent quest to realize the Revolution in Military Affairs, the administration shifted its approach. The new approach portrayed the United States as the principal guardian of the international order, which worked with and on behalf of those that enjoyed the fruits of the U.S.-system. And from a practical point of view, the administration’s portrayal of a threat that endangered not only the United States, but its allies and trading partners ensured material and conceptual support for the Global War on Terror. The approach did not marginalize considerations for a maritime strategy—just the opposite, it invited them.

For his part, Morgan was emboldened with the knowledge that he understood the emerging strategic environment and the new direction in U.S. strategy to be advantageous to the Navy in a way that other senior Navy leaders did not. Given the atrophied state of American naval thinking, he believed the Navy had failed to comprehend the implications of shifts in the political and economic order caused by globalization. Unlike Admirals Art Cebrowski, Archie Clemens, Jerry Tuttle, and Bill Owens, Morgan was an institutional critic of a different sort. He was not a technological, but a strategic visionary. Unlike theirs, however, Morgan’s initiatives cut across the grain of institutional thinking. Consequently, although Morgan got his dialogue, it admittedly raged out of his control and diverted attention away from his primary arguments, which were about how the United States’ vital interests and military should be viewed in terms of the system and how the Navy had a unique relationship with the system.¹³⁶

Moreover, Morgan did not make these arguments clear enough. By their nature, these arguments were abstract and their essential points were not self-evident to a corps

¹³⁵ Jonathan Monten, “The Roots of the Bush Doctrine: Power, Nationalism, and Democracy Promotion in U.S. Strategy,” *International Security* 29, no. 4 (Spring 2005): 141.

¹³⁶ Morgan, discussion with the author.

of officers that did not have backgrounds that yielded an understanding of what a maritime strategy is, how emerging trends were buoying considerations for a maritime strategy, or how such a strategy would further institutional interests. What was abundantly clear to senior Navy leaders, however, was that Morgan was attempting to rebalance the fleet and change how it was to be deployed. Since the fleet's composition and use go to the core of how Navy officers see the Navy's purpose, the ensuing debate should have been of no surprise.

The appointment of Admiral Mike Mullen as CNO provided Morgan with an opportunity to apply the lessons learned from the 3/1 Strategy and, with the new CNO's guidance, launch a wave of strategic concepts and strategic statements that would provide the conceptual stepping-stones for *A Cooperative Strategy*.

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XII. THE 1,000-SHIP NAVY, 2005–06

A. MULLEN TAKES COMMAND

CNO Mike Mullen moved decisively after taking over in July 2005. He immediately tasked the development of a “Navy Strategic Plan” to determine the fleet’s composition, stabilize the shipbuilding budget, and set the number of ships required.¹ He intimated that he would change the fleet’s composition, noting in his assumption-of-command message that among his principal challenges was “the need to build a fleet for the future, [which]....will be different from the one we have today.”² He publically fired Vice Admiral Joe Sestak, deputy CNO for Warfare Requirements and Programs (N6/N7), a protégé of CNO Vern Clark, for having maintained a “poor command climate,” reportedly the result of Sestak’s ill temper and habit of working his subordinates around the clock.³ These decisions, all of which happened within a week of taking over, served notice that Mullen was now in charge and that change was in the wind.

According to his tasking memo, Mullen wanted the Navy Strategic Plan to provide his guidance to the resource sponsors, who were expected in turn to show how the Navy’s completed Program Objective Memorandum reflected that guidance.⁴ He saw the Navy Strategic Plan as the first phase of the Navy’s calendar-based Planning, Programming, Budgeting, and Execution process. Mullen wanted the Navy Strategic Plan to examine the future security environment, identify required high-end capabilities, and

¹ Robert A. Hamilton, “Navy Operations Chief Calls for Shipbuilding Study – Mullen Takes Aggressive Approach to Calculating Fleet of the Future,” *The (New London, CT) Day*, August 5, 2005.

² Admiral Michael G. Mullen, message to the Navy, Subject: “All Ahead Full,” date time group: 231853Z JUL 05 (July 23, 2005).

³ Christopher P. Cavas, “Deputy CNO Sestak Is ‘Reassigned’ – New CNO Reportedly Makes Move Because of ‘Poor Command Climate,’” *Navy Times*, July 25, 2005 and Thomas Fitzgerald, “Sestak’s Tough Fight for Senate Seat,” *Philadelphia Inquirer*, April 11, 2010. As one Navy official noted, “saying it was not a pleasant place to work would be an understatement.” Andrew Scutro, “Mullen Makes Waves on Day 1,” *Navy Times*, August 8, 2005.

⁴ Admiral Michael G. Mullen, memo to Vice Admiral John G. Morgan Jr., Deputy CNO for Information, Plans, and Strategy (N3/N5), Subject: “Navy Strategic Plan,” July 29, 2005.

develop a global concept of operations. He also wanted it to serve as the cornerstone for a family of follow-on strategies. As noted, the Navy Strategic Plan would provide the CNO's "risk guidance" (e.g., "take more risk in anti-submarine warfare capabilities") and "desirable effects guidance" (e.g., the "Navy operates across the full maritime spectrum—open ocean, littoral, coastal, and internal water—and influences events ashore").⁵

But to develop the Navy Strategic Plan, Mullen did not turn to the deputy CNO for Resources, Requirements, and Assessments (N8) or the deputy CNO for Warfare Requirements and Programs (N6/N7) as one might expect. Instead, he tasked Vice Admiral John Morgan, the deputy CNO for Information, Plans, and Strategy (N3/N5), to develop it in collaboration with other elements in OPNAV, the Navy component commands, the office of the secretary of the Navy, and Admiral John Nathman's U.S. Fleet Forces Command,

To influence the Navy's 2008 budget submission and the 2006 QDR, both of which were nearing completion, Mullen wanted the Navy Strategic Plan to be completed within a few weeks.⁶ Given the bureaucratic nature of OPNAV, not to mention the requirement to form consensus, it was a tight timeline.

B. THE 1,000-SHIP NAVY

In September 2005, CNO Mullen introduced the 1,000-Ship Navy concept, which was very favorably received by President George Bush.⁷ It argued that maritime security was an international problem that called for an international solution. The maritime security environment had grown too complex, its threats too diffused for one navy to handle. As Vice Admiral Morgan argued, "the process of globalization has inextricably

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ Ibid. Also see Christopher P. Cavas, "Full Speed Ahead – Mullen Unleashes 10 Memos on Shipbuilding Review, 'Strategic Plan,'" *Navy Times*, August 22, 2005.

⁷ Christopher P. Cavas, "'1,000-Ship Navy' Plan Draws Mixed Reviews – President is Reportedly Among Backers," *Navy Times*, October 9, 2006.

linked nations together in a de facto security arrangement that has resulted in increased interdependence and reliance on international cooperation as a prerequisite for national prosperity.”⁸

The “1,000-Ship Navy,” as Morgan’s idea was originally dubbed, was envisioned as a self-organizing, self-governing, “come-as-you-are” cooperative global maritime security network that coordinated the activities of volunteer nations’ navies, coast guards, and constabulary units. The goal was to protect ports and harbors, territorial waters, the high seas, and international straits and address the common threats of terrorism, piracy, illegal immigration, human smuggling, drug trafficking, environmental exploitation, and the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction.⁹ The 1,000-Ship Navy, later renamed the “Global Maritime Partnership,” demonstrated the ability of the world’s only globally deployed Navy to knit together the interests of like-minded states in ways that air forces and armies cannot.

Morgan also helped develop the Global Fleet Station, which was the brainchild of Captain Wayne Porter, who had brought the idea over from Europe, where he had worked for Mullen. As the head of CNO Mullen’s Strategic Actions Group (N00Z), Porter further developed the idea with the assistance of N5’s Strategy and Concepts branch (N5SC).¹⁰ A Global Fleet Station was a self-sustaining, home base comprised of one or more large amphibious ships that would steam off the coast and play host and coordinate the activities of U.S. small-craft and riverine boats, helicopters, mobile training teams, Seabees, Army engineers, Explosive Ordnance personnel, salvage divers, medical and dental teams, and so on.¹¹ Global Fleet Stations were to operate in cooperation with host nations, and support the ships of other nations acting in cooperation with the United

⁸ Vice Admiral John G. Morgan Jr. and Rear Admiral Charles W. Martoglio, “The 1,000-Ship Navy Global Maritime Network,” U.S. Naval Institute *Proceedings* 131, no. 11 (November 2005): 14.

⁹ *Ibid.*, 15.

¹⁰ The author’s experience as the branch chief for OPNAV N5’s Strategy and Concepts (N5SC) from February to June 2006.

¹¹ “White Paper on Global Fleet Stations,” unpublished draft (Washington, DC: Office of the Chief of Naval Operations, March 20, 2006).

States. They would also provide basing facilities for other U.S. federal agencies and non-governmental organizations. The Global Fleet Station, which also proved popular with Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld, was conceived as a way to shape regional security by using capabilities that would normally have been considered support functions. Morgan also promoted the idea of Maritime Domain Awareness, another concept that sought to leverage international cooperation by pooling and re-disseminating information accumulated from ship-borne identification systems, radar, port security systems, and so on, in order to track ships at sea and produce “actionable” intelligence on terrorists and criminals.

Initiatives like these reflected how the Navy was adapting conceptually to the emerging operational demands of the global war on terrorism and to the rash of natural disasters that arose at this same time, to which Navy units had been called upon to respond.¹² They reflected the Navy’s forays into more population-centric shaping missions, which were intended not simply as humanitarianism, but as a contribution to the war on terror, and which highlighted the Navy’s ability to modulate force and bring about strategic effects at the local level without leaving a large American footprint ashore.¹³

C. THE NATIONAL STRATEGY FOR MARITIME SECURITY

In September 2005, President Bush signed *The National Strategy for Maritime Security*, which supported CNO Mullen’s and Vice Admiral Morgan’s argument about the relationship between sea power, collective maritime security, and global prosperity. *The National Strategy for Maritime Security* was the product of a collaborative effort

¹² Most notably, these were the Indian Ocean earthquake/tsunami in December 2004 (particularly the relief efforts in Sumatra, Indonesia) and hurricane Katrina in August 2005.

¹³ These initiatives also reflected how the Navy was adapting politically. OSD’s new high-profile initiatives included the then-newly signed (November 28, 2005) Department of Defense Directive 3000.05 “Military Support for Stability, Security, Transition, and Reconstruction Operations” (which conceptually replaced the 1990s’ “Military Operations Other Than War”) and the Building Partnership Capacity effort. The latter sought to improve the capabilities of U.S. allies and partners to police their respective local areas, particularly in terms of countering terrorism.

between the Departments of Defense and Homeland Security, and remains the only national strategic statement of its type.

The National Strategy for Maritime Security related maritime security to the prosperity and security of the United States and the international system generally. Its argument was captured in its opening paragraph:

The safety and economic security of the United States depend in substantial part upon the secure use of the world's oceans. The United States has a vital national interest in maritime security....The oceans, much of which are global commons under no State's jurisdiction, offer all nations, even landlocked States, a network of sea-lanes or highways that is of enormous importance to their security and prosperity.¹⁴

Because of the global economy's reliance on the oceans, as *The National Strategy for Maritime Security* asserted, all participatory nations have a common interest in sustaining the maritime-based commerce that undergirds economic security and in protecting it from terrorists, piracy, environmental degradation, and illegal seaborne immigration.

Overall, *The National Strategy for Maritime Security* reflected and expounded upon the ideas of the 3/1 Strategy and the 1,000-Ship Navy, for example, and provided another national-level hand-hold for Mullen and Morgan to stabilize the Navy's slipping relevance in terms other than its operational virtues. In speeches and at conferences, they began offering a simple and compelling formula that related and bound collective economic interests in a more interdependent, globalizing world with U.S.-led international sea power. As Mullen noted in a speech in London in December 2005,

Virtually every nation is touched in some way, shape, or form by globalization, and most nations understand the prosperity that comes from participating in global markets. In this context, the case for Seapower becomes very clear: economic prosperity is the goal of most nations—or put more simply: I want my children to live a better life than I; this prosperity can best be achieved by embracing globalization and international market forces; globalization and international markets

¹⁴ *The National Strategy for Maritime Security* (Washington, DC: White House, Government Printing Office, September 2005), 1, http://www.dhs.gov/xlibrary/assets/HSPD13_MaritimeSecurityStrategy.pdf.

require trade—in fact, 90% of the world’s trade moves by sea; to trade by sea, the world needs a safe and secure maritime domain; and, to ensure the security of this vast domain, most nations need effective maritime forces. In our global and interconnected world, every Navy, coast guard, and maritime force matters.¹⁵

Mullen and Morgan were widening the dialogue about the Navy’s greater relevance beyond the Pentagon. They were appealing not only to the White House, but to a worldwide audience, while deftly challenging the United States’ strategic approach. At a time when the rest of the world saw the United States’ conduct as increasingly *unilateral*, *preemptive*, and *militarized*, Mullen was advancing a contrasting strategic approach. He was essentially repudiating the United States’ recent strategic behavior, particularly in Iraq, in favor of an emphasis on collective prosperity, coordinated global security, and maintaining the stability of U.S.-managed system. The rebellious nature of Mullen’s approach and its implications for the future direction of U.S. strategy were, surprisingly, lost on those in the Pentagon who were busy trying to transform the Department of Defense to fight what they saw as a generation-long global irregular conflict. Mullen’s *defensive*, *systemic*, and *collective-managerial* outlook was not lost on other governments and navies around the world, however.

D. PUSHBACK: PART II

By the late fall of 2005 it was clear that CNO Mullen had fanned the flames of the smoldering debate between Vice Admiral Morgan and Admiral Nathman, a debate that the CNO had hoped to avoid (and, in practical terms, reportedly did little to referee). In August 2005, Mullen had noted in a speech at the Naval War College that, while Marines argue issues *before* the commandant of the Marine Corps makes a decision, in the Navy, the “CNO makes a decision, and everybody goes, ‘Holy Cow, he’s serious, we’d better

¹⁵ Admiral Michael G. Mullen, speech to the Royal United Services Institute’s Future Maritime Warfare Conference, December 13, 2005, <http://www.Navy.mil/Navydata/cno/mullen/speeches/mullen051213.txt>.

have a debate.’ I’m not going to do that,” Mullen stated. “I don’t have the time.”¹⁶ He did not have much choice, however. Nathman, who was reportedly shocked that Mullen’s agenda had gotten as much traction as it had, formed an opposition of sorts with other like-minded admirals, mostly aviators like Nathman, many of whom had spent much of their careers in the Pacific.

Nathman and his supporters saw themselves as back-stoppers against both the Bush administration’s efforts to portray irregular threats as proportional to those encountered in the Cold War and the soft power concepts embraced by Morgan. They were not convinced that the trends that were being extrapolated from the present state of the world were *permanent* to the extent that they required a departure from tradition or that they could not be absorbed by a traditional force structure and worldview that, from their perspective, had always proven to be flexible and adaptable enough.¹⁷

Nathman’s camp believed the Navy should not squander its funds or prematurely erode the service lives of the fleet’s ships and aircraft on disaster relief efforts or chasing terrorists. Instead, the Navy should keep its powder dry, and organize to deter and fight a major war with China, North Korea, or Iran—three states that headed the list of likely adversaries for the foreseeable future. War against any of them would require the Navy to play a leading role. They believed that the Navy should present itself in those terms, because it was in the realm of major combat operations that the greatest risks to U.S. security continued to be found, and because focusing on them was the safest and surest way to secure the next generation of advanced warships and aircraft.

In contrast, Mullen and Morgan sought a broader, less militarized understanding of sea power. Like Nathman, they were not altogether convinced that international terrorism would define the strategic landscape in the long term either. But to fail to catch

¹⁶ Christopher J. Castelli, “Navy Proceeds with Reviews on Readiness, Organization, Shipbuilding,” *Inside the Navy*, September 12, 2005.

¹⁷ Geoffrey Till, “‘A Cooperative Strategy for 21st Century Seapower:’ A View from Outside,” *Naval War College Review* 61, no. 2 (Spring 2008): 25–26.

the real long-term trend toward global economic integration (and, ideally, security cooperation) would not be good for the Navy's institutional health nor the nation's interests. Defining the Navy in the terms of major inter-state conflict did little to highlight its unique role in underwriting global prosperity or to differentiate it from the other services.

From Mullen's view, neither the Navy's offensive identity nor its carrier-centric fleet was being threatened politically as they had been in the late 1970s. Mullen had noted soon after taking over that he saw no need to trade high-end for low-end capabilities, which was a change from what the 3/1 Strategy had asserted.¹⁸ In essence, Mullen and Morgan thought that relative to their costs, more specialized capabilities required for local stability and shaping operations and counter-terrorism would bring about disproportional political results in terms of their systemic effects.¹⁹ "When you think about what it takes to build a capital ship versus what it takes to develop this kind of capabilities," Mullen noted, "it's a relatively inexpensive investment."²⁰ But Nathman was having none of it. To him, Mullen was not trying to expand the fleet's capabilities. He was trying to rebalance the fleet.

Mullen and Nathman presented their respective views in the January 2006 issue of *Proceedings*. In his article, Mullen stated that his own discussion was not about programs or policies, but about developing a "framework" to "make sense of the world." "My point is this," he continued, "it is time to elevate the discussion of sea power. For far too long and in far too many ways, it has been about big-ship battles and high-tech weapons systems. Life is just not that simple anymore....We face entirely new challenges."²¹ Mullen stated that while the Navy still required lethal warfighting capabilities, it needed

¹⁸ Castelli, "Navy Proceeds with Reviews."

¹⁹ Daniel J. Moran, "Stability Operations: The View From Afloat," in *Naval Peacekeeping and Humanitarian Operations: Stability from the Sea*, ed. James J. Wirtz and Jeffrey A. Larsen (New York: Routledge, 2008), 15.

²⁰ Castelli, "Navy Proceeds with Reviews."

²¹ Admiral Michael G. Mullen, "What I Believe: Eight Tenets That Guide My Vision for the 21st Century Navy," U.S. Naval Institute *Proceedings* 132, no. 1 (January 2006): 13.

much more than that.²² Taking aim at what he no doubt thought were the shortsighted perspectives of Navy leaders like CNO Clark and Nathman, Mullen noted that “the Navy cannot meet the threats of tomorrow by simply maintaining today’s readiness and requirements.”²³

In his article, Nathman pushed back against the Bush administration’s “presentist” mindset and argued for forward presence and for a “powerful,” “flexible,” and “responsive” power-projecting fleet that could “strike quickly and strike deep,” which—by virtue of its ability to be used by U.S. leaders as a “diplomatic rheostat”—would prevent the kinds of costly wars the nation now confronted.²⁴ He noted,

Today’s principal struggle pits the United States and its partners against radical Islamists, but if the past is prologue, America will again find itself confronting an aggressive state. As the U.S. Navy expands its capabilities to promote maritime security and pursue terrorists abroad, it will continue to prepare for major combat operations. Prudence, custom, and history dictate that we be ready to deliver that level of power....The Navy’s ability to respond...[cannot be] handicapped by...the wavering commitment of a coalition member.²⁵

Over the next year and a half, the clashes between Nathman’s U.S. Fleet Forces Command and Morgan’s N3/N5 over three high-level strategic statements, the last of which was *A Cooperative Strategy*, grew fierce as the relationship between the two organizations descended into rancor. As one admiral in N3/N5 remarked to the author in March 2006, the battle was “nothing less than a struggle for the heart and soul of the Navy.”

²² Ibid.

²³ Ibid., 16.

²⁴ Admiral John B. Nathman, “Shaping the Future,” U.S. Naval Institute *Proceedings* 132, no. 1 (January 2006): 20–21.

²⁵ Ibid., 21.

E. THE 2006 QDR

Admiral Mullen's argument for broadening the fleet's capabilities was bolstered by the 2006 QDR, which was signed by Secretary Rumsfeld in February 2006. This influential, threat-centric document focused on countering an increasing number of threats to U.S. security. The 2006 QDR assumed the "long war" thesis, meaning that the future of U.S. security would be dominated by the demands of warfare against irregular, non-state enemies. Signaling a radical shift in U.S. strategy, it argued that the military's primary purpose should not be viewed so much in terms of traditional inter-state conflict, but in terms of counter-terrorism, counter-insurgency, and stability, transition, and reconstruction. Accordingly, the QDR argued that the military needed to shift its capability portfolio, which, as it noted, had been shaped by the Cold War.²⁶ (See Figure 9.)

Specifically, to defeat terrorist networks, defend the homeland, shape states that were at a "strategic crossroads," and prevent "hostile" states and non-state actors from acquiring weapons of mass destruction, it argued, like the 3/1 Strategy, that the military's capability "sweet spot" needed to be shifted toward irregular warfare and other forms of asymmetrical and disruptive threats.²⁷

²⁶ Specifically, it noted, "The United States' experience in the Cold War still profoundly influences the way that the Department of Defense is organized and executes its mission." *Quadrennial Defense Review Report of 2006* (Washington, DC: Department of Defense, Government Printing Office, February 6, 2006), 83.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, 19.

QDR Objective – Shift in Focus

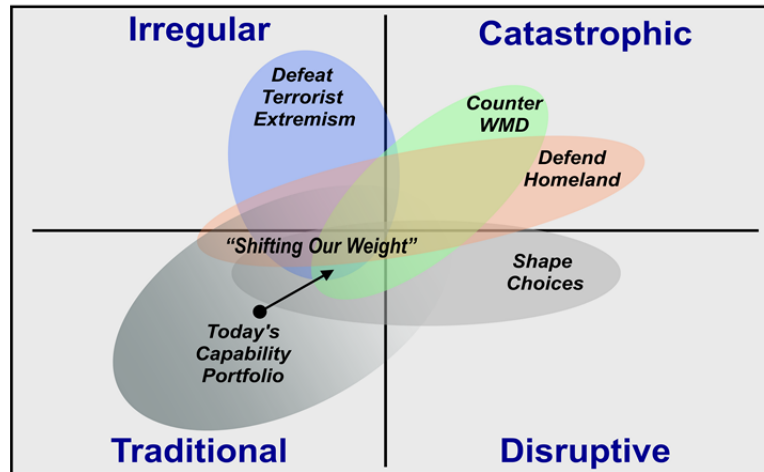


Figure 9. The 2006 QDR's Shift of Focus²⁸

The QDR also introduced a new force-planning construct, which replaced the 2001 QDR's 1-4-2-1 construct. The new construct divided the Department of Defense's activities into three areas: 1) Homeland Defense; 2) War on Terror/Irregular (Asymmetric) Warfare; and 3) Conventional campaigns. Each of these was further divided between continuous day-to-day "steady-state" and episodic "surge" operations. (See Figure 10.) The QDR used a Venn diagram of slightly overlapping ellipses to represent the construct, which was colloquially known as the "Michelin Man" in the Pentagon due to its resemblance to the cartooned figure in Michelin tire advertisements. The QDR, like the 3/1 Strategy, argued that the missions of Homeland Defense and War on Terror/Irregular Warfare were not subsets of traditional, conventional campaign-oriented challenges and thus required unique capabilities.

For *Homeland Defense*, steady-state operations included globally integrated missions that deterred attacks on the homeland, while surge operations meant responding

²⁸ Ibid.

to attacks that used weapons of mass destruction or to other catastrophic events like hurricane Katrina.²⁹

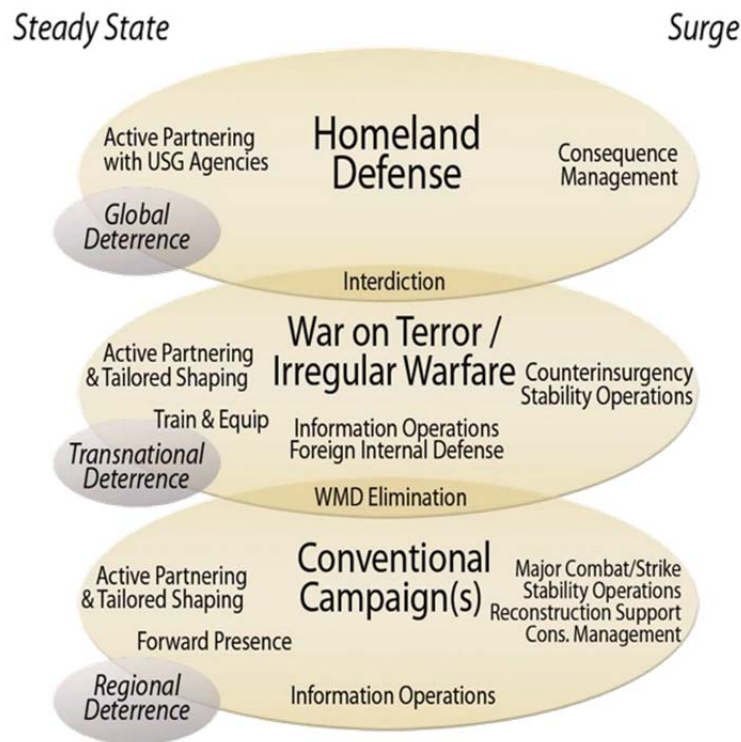


Figure 10. The 2006 QDR's New Force Planning Construct³⁰

War on Terror/Irregular Warfare's steady-state operations included deterring transnational terrorists' attacks, particularly through forward presence, and assisting allies and partners and building their capabilities and capacities through security cooperation. A surge campaign meant large-scale and potentially protracted operations like those in Iraq that included counterinsurgency and security, stability, transition and reconstruction operations. Steady-state for *Conventional Campaigns* meant using forward-deployed forces to deter regional inter-state conflict with day-to-day presence missions and

²⁹ Paragraph based on *Quadrennial Defense Review Report of 2006*, 37–38.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, 38.

security cooperation efforts. Surging meant fighting two “nearly simultaneous conventional campaigns” or one conventional campaign plus one protracted, large-scale irregular war.³¹

In what was a radical shift in U.S. strategy, the 2006 QDR argued that the United States needed to be as competent in waging irregular war as it was in conventional war.³² It also argued that steady-state operations, and not surge operations, would be the primary determinant used to size the U.S. military.³³ Reflecting Vice Admiral Morgan’s thinking, it called for developing “dynamic” cooperative partnerships with allies to help them defend themselves and police their own regions.³⁴ “Consistent with the QDR’s emphasis on prevention,” it noted, “guidance must place greater emphasis on forces and capabilities needed for deterrence and other peacetime shaping activities.”³⁵ This was music to the ears of Navy leaders, who sought to highlight the steady-state abilities of a forward deployed, combat-credible fleet that worked to deter conflict.

F. THE NAVY STRATEGIC PLAN—THE MEANS

The Navy Strategic Plan was not finished within a few weeks as the CNO had hoped. In fact, it took seven months. He signed the classified version in April 2006 and a month later the unclassified version, which lacked the classified risk guidance section. Rear Admiral Charles Martoglio, the director of Strategy and Policy (N5), who wrote the document basing it on the 3/1 Strategy, had transferred in the fall of 2005.³⁶ The Strategy and Concepts branch (N5SC), which handled the document, had to reorganize

³¹ Ibid.

³² Colin S. Gray, “Document No. 1: The Quadrennial Defense Review (QDR), 2006, and the Perils of the Twenty-First Century,” *Comparative Strategy* 25, no. 2 (April–June 2006): 142.

³³ *Quadrennial Defense Review Report of 2006*, 36.

³⁴ Ibid., vii.

³⁵ Ibid., 36.

³⁶ Commander Paul N. Nagy, U.S. Navy (Ret.), discussion with the author, March 4, 2011, Arlington, VA.

Martoglio's draft to accord with the QDR, which was released in February 2006.³⁷ But the primary reason for the delay was that Mullen wanted his resource allocation guidance to be the result of a collaborative effort between Vice Admiral Morgan's N3/N5 and the three-star and four-star admirals that headed the Navy's component commands. Forging consensus on any Navy strategic statement was bound to be a time-consuming process, particularly one that involved Admiral Nathman's U.S. Fleet Forces Command, which asked for and was granted extensions to turn in what would be pages upon pages of critical, well-argued comments on OPNAV's drafts.³⁸

The Navy Strategic Plan started out by explaining the CNO's overall vision—Americans secure at home and overseas; the sea and air lines of communication open to facilitate international commerce; enduring naval relationships and increased cooperation with emerging partners' navies; and “a combat-ready Navy—forward-deployed, rotational and surge capable—large enough, agile enough, and lethal enough to deter any threat and defeat any foe as part of the Joint Force.”³⁹ Its one-page summary of the strategic landscape parroted the QDR and its vision of a strategic environment that was filled by a variety of threats. It noted that, like the Cold War, the “long war” would “be punctuated by spikes of intense warfighting activity, not unlike those against North Korea and North Vietnam.”⁴⁰ It highlighted how the 1,000-Ship Navy, Global Maritime Domain Awareness, and the Global Maritime Security Cooperation Strategy supported the QDR. It asserted the virtues of forward deployed naval forces and described how such distributed, networked forces operated across the spectrum of warfare and how they could aggregate rapidly for conventional campaigns and disaggregate for steady-state

³⁷ Rear Admiral Martoglio's writers were Lieutenant Commander Joseph Carrigan and Lieutenant Mark W. Lawrence.

³⁸ Commander Paul N. Nagy, U.S. Navy (Ret.), discussion with the author.

³⁹ “The Navy Strategic Plan in Support of Program Objective Memorandum 08” (unclassified version), Washington, DC, Office of the Chief of Naval Operations, May 2006, 3–4.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 7.

operations in support of the war on terror.⁴¹ But the document lacked any language about the relationship between sea power, free markets, and collective prosperity.

At its core, the Navy Strategic Plan was simply a reapplication of the 3/1 Strategy's force structure argument. In its opening paragraph, it noted that the Navy

must implement a strategy that balances the enduring requirements for traditional naval capabilities integral to the conduct of conventional campaigns with those needed to squarely confront and influence the highly dynamic security environment of the 21st Century.⁴²

The Navy Strategic Plan leveraged the 2006 QDR to the hilt. It stated up front that the CNO's guidance was "directly and deliberately linked" to the QDR's force planning construct, which

suggests that "non traditional" missions sets such as counter-terrorism, humanitarian affairs, disaster relief, counter-piracy, peace-keeping, and peace enforcement, are no longer appropriately considered lesser included subsets of the mission sets associated with major regional conflicts or major combat operations.... [It] suggests... [that] there are unique capabilities that the Joint Force must develop that fall outside of the rubric of conventional warfighting capabilities.⁴³

Like many of the Navy's strategic documents of the period, the Navy Strategic Plan inserted and referenced the Michelin Man diagram, which of course resembled the 3/1 Strategy's Bear Paw graphic.

As noted in an unclassified brief presented by Morgan later in the summer, the Navy Strategic Plan sought to accept more risk where naval capabilities overlapped with those of the other services and where "joint" efficiencies could be found, and less risk on those capabilities that only the Navy could provide. Taking aim at the institution's highly

⁴¹ Ibid., 16–18.

⁴² Ibid., 3.

⁴³ Ibid., 8–9.

conservative approach to force structure decisions, Morgan noted that the Navy needs to “steer [the] best course, not just [the] safest.”⁴⁴

If the QDR bolstered Mullen and Morgan’s force structure arguments, the *National Security Strategy*, which was signed by President Bush in March 2006, supported their arguments about the need to relate U.S. military force to broader, more systemic goals. Bush noted that the strategy was founded on two pillars:

The first pillar is promoting freedom, justice, and human dignity—working to end tyranny, to promote effective democracies, and to extend prosperity through free and fair trade....Peace and international stability are most reliably built on a foundation of freedom. The second pillar of our strategy is confronting the challenges of our time by leading a growing community of democracies.⁴⁵

Rhetorically, at least, the Bush foreign policy was still Wilsonian—“The goal of our statecraft is to help create a world of democratic, well-governed states that can meet the needs of their citizens and conduct themselves responsibly in the international system. This is the best way to provide enduring security for the American people.”⁴⁶ Democracies were noted to be the “most responsible members” of the international political and economic system.⁴⁷ Thus, increasing them was viewed as the most effective way to ensure international stability, reduce regional wars, combat terrorism, and spread peace and prosperity.⁴⁸

The elephantine nature of the Pentagon’s force structure programming process made it difficult for the CNO to change the fleet’s composition in anything less than five years. For the present, however, Mullen did not have to trade high-end for low-end

⁴⁴ “Navy’s Maritime Strategy,” PowerPoint brief presented by Vice Admiral John G. Morgan Jr. at the All-Flag Officer Symposium, June 20, 2006, slide 12.

⁴⁵ *The National Military Strategy of the United States* (Washington, DC: Department of Defense, Government Printing Office, March 2006), ii.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 1.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 3.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*

capabilities. The Navy used its comparatively small portion of the Department of Defense's supplemental budget that paid for the ongoing wars to fund programs that could be rationalized in terms of counter-terrorism, counter-insurgency, and stability, transition, and reconstruction operations.

Still, even though the Navy Strategic Plan was not completed in time to influence the Navy's 2008 Program Objective Memorandum, other flag officers in OPNAV viewed the Navy Strategic Plan as useful enough to be repeated in subsequent years.⁴⁹ For their part, those in Strategy and Policy (N5) finally had a CNO-mandated process that ensured they could shape the Navy's budget submission instead of the other way around.

G. THE NAVAL OPERATIONS CONCEPT—THE WAYS

As the Navy Strategic Plan was nearing completion, another strategic statement was already in the works. This was the Navy Operational Concept, which Vice Admiral Morgan set in motion after the Navy-Marine Corps Warfighter Talks in December 2005.⁵⁰ Admiral Mullen wanted Morgan to update the "Naval Operational Concept for Joint Operations," which had been signed by CNO Clark and Commandant of the Marine Corps General Michael Hagee in 2003. Mullen wanted it to identify the "guiding principles" of naval operations and the "operational methods" of how U.S. naval forces would balance homeland defense, global deterrence, war on terrorism/irregular warfare, conventional campaigns, and security and stability operations.⁵¹ He wanted it to highlight the ability of U.S. naval forces to aggregate and disaggregate to shape the environment to prevent strife, conduct the steady-state war on terror mission, and provide "combat

⁴⁹ Peter M. Swartz with Karin Duggan, "U.S. Navy Capstone Strategies and Concepts (2001–2010): Strategy, Policy, Concept, and Vision Documents," PowerPoint brief in PDF (Alexandria, VA: Center for Naval Analyses, December 2011), 99–101, slides 198–202, <http://www.cna.org/research/2011/us-navy-capstone-strategies-concepts-2001-2010>.

⁵⁰ The title was subsequently changed to the "Naval Operations Concept."

⁵¹ Admiral Michael G. Mullen, memo to Vice Admiral John G. Morgan Jr., Deputy CNO for Information, Plans, and Strategy (N3/N5), Subject: "Naval Operating Concept," January 6, 2006.

credible power” across the spectrum of warfare with “strategic speed.”⁵² Moreover, he wanted it to align with national-level guidance as well as with the Marine Corps Operating Concept, which was in the works, and otherwise link strategic guidance to operations in a way that would be understood by every sailor and Marine.⁵³

Morgan and Lieutenant General James N. Mattis, the commanding general of Marine Corps Combat Development Command (and who later commanded U.S. Central Command [2010–2013]), oversaw the effort.⁵⁴ Rear Admiral Philip H. Cullom, who had been the branch chief of Strategy and Concepts (N513) in 1999, took the project with him when he left Deep Blue (which now was in N3/N5) and reported in March 2006 as the director of Strategy and Policy (N51). While there were the usual differences of opinion between the two services, which were represented by two three-man writing teams, the effort was not nearly as contentious as past projects, apparently owing to the fact that the Marines saw similarity between Mullen’s and Morgan’s ideas and those in the *Marine Corps Operating Concepts for a Changing Security Environment*, which Mattis signed in March 2006.⁵⁵ Still, the Naval Operations Concept took all summer to complete. Mullen and Hagee did not sign the thirty-six page, pocket-sized booklet until September 2006.⁵⁶

⁵² Ibid.

⁵³ Ibid.

⁵⁴ Like previous attempts at developing a naval operating concept, the lead for the Navy was not the Naval Warfare Development Command—which, ostensibly, was the Navy’s equivalent of Marine Corps Combat Development Command, nor was the Marine Corps’ lead the head of Plans, Policies, and Operations, which, ostensibly, was the equivalent of OPNAV N3/N5.

⁵⁵ The writing teams were Captain Mark C. “Cyrus” Vance, deputy director of Deep Blue, and Commanders Thomas P. Lalor and Thomas C. Disy (the latter of whom moved to N5), and on the Marine Corps side Colonel Douglas M. King and Lieutenant Colonel John C. Berry, U.S. Marine Corps (Ret.) of Marine Corps Combat Development Command and Major Kelly P. Houlgate of Plans, Policies, and Operations’ Strategic Initiatives Group, Headquarters Marine Corps. “Marine Corps Operating Concepts for a Changing Security Environment,” 1st ed., Lieutenant General J. N. Mattis, Commanding General, Marine Corps Combat Development Command (Quantico, VA: Marine Corps Combat Development Command, March 2006).

⁵⁶ During the Navy-Marine Warfighter talks in late August 2006, Admiral Nathman, who had argued all along that the Naval Operations Concept should have been developed by U.S. Fleet Forces Command, reportedly objected to the final draft and proposed delaying it. Admiral Mullen insisted on resolving the issues immediately. The all-night session between representatives from OPNAV, the Marine Corps, and U.S. Fleet Forces Command made minor revisions to the draft that was signed soon after.

The Navy Operational Concept characterized the strategic environment in terms of OSD's four challenges—traditional, irregular, catastrophic, and disruptive.⁵⁷ It stated that to achieve the nation's strategic objectives—which were to secure the homeland from attack, ensure strategic access and global freedom, solve problems with allies and partners, and bring about “favorable security conditions” by countering aggression—the United States needed distributed, forward-deployed forces to “assure” allies and friends, “dissuade” potential foes, “deter” aggression, and “defeat” foes if necessary.

It noted that U.S. naval forces had to change the way they operated to accord with the *National Strategy for Maritime Security*'s three broad, free-market-oriented guiding principles: 1) preserving freedom of the seas; 2) facilitating and defending commerce; and 3) facilitating the movement of goods and people across U.S. borders while screening out dangerous goods and people.⁵⁸ Otherwise, however, the Navy Operational Concept, like the Navy Strategic Plan, was devoid of the lofty language that related American sea power to collective prosperity and U.S. security.

It also repeated the QDR's argument that Homeland Defense and War on Terror/Irregular Warfare were not subsets of traditional Conventional Campaigns, and that they needed specialized capabilities. It interpreted the QDR as having five strategic missions: 1) Homeland Defense; 2) War on Terror/Irregular (Asymmetric) Warfare; 3) Conventional campaigns; 4) Deterrence; and 5) Shaping and Stability Operations.⁵⁹ It argued that although forward presence, deterrence, sea control, power projection and crisis response were their core capabilities, the Navy and Marine Corps would continue to be engaged in missions that were not subsets of traditional combat operations. The challenge was thus to remain proficient in traditional missions while improving their

⁵⁷ Paragraph based on the “Naval Operations Concept,” Chief of Naval Operations Admiral Michael G. Mullen and Commandant of the Marine Corps General Michael W. Hagee, U.S. Marine Corps, Department of the Navy, Office of the Chief of Naval Operations, Washington, DC, June 2006, 6–7.

⁵⁸ Ibid., 7–8.

⁵⁹ Ibid., 10.

ability in non-traditional ones so as “to ensure that naval power and influence can be applied at and from the sea, across the littorals, and ashore, as required.”⁶⁰

The Navy Operational Concept then listed and briefly explained the Navy and Marine Corps’s naval missions, guiding naval principles, methods, and desired strategic objectives and outcomes. (See Figure 11.)

Naval Operations Concept Construct

Commander's Guidance: Leverage Historic Interdependence, Assess/Consult, Open Discussion/Debate With a Common Goal				
Strategic Missions	Naval Missions	Guiding Naval Principles	Methods	Strategic Objectives/Outcomes
Homeland Defense (HLD)	Forward Naval Presence	Agility	Globally Networked Operations	Help Win the Nation's Wars
War on Terror (WOT)/Irregular Warfare (IW)	Crisis Response	Coordinated Global Influence	Distributed Operations	Establish Favorable Security Conditions
Conventional Campaigns	Expeditionary Power Projection	Deployability and Employability	Adaptive Force Packaging: Right Force, Right Time, Right Place	Secure Strategic Access & Retain Global Freedom of Action
Deterrence	Maritime Security Operations	Interoperability	Aggregate, Disaggregate, Re-aggregate	Strengthen Alliances and Partnerships
Shaping and Stability Operations (SSO)	Sea Control	Persistent Presence	Cross Fleet Standardization	Secure US from Attack
	Deterrence	Adaptive Force Packaging	Task Focused Training	
	Security Cooperation	Precision	Cultural Awareness	
	Civil-Military Operations	Speed	Sea Basing	
	Counterinsurgency	Unpredictability for Our Adversaries and Reliability for Our Friends	Building Partner Capacity	
	Counterterrorism			
	Counter-proliferation			
	Air and Missile Defense			
	Information Operations			
Foundations of NOC: Leadership and Professionalism, Mission Type Orders, Global Awareness (Maritime Domain Awareness and Beyond), and Interdependence				

Figure 11. The Naval Operations Concept Construct⁶¹

Some of the naval missions—like deterrence, forward presence, sea control, and power projection—were long familiar, while a few, like civil-military operations, had come to the fore in the 1990s. The rest reflected the Navy’s and Marine Corps’s respective post-9/11 operational experiences. The document highlighted the role of U.S. naval forces in humanitarian assistance and disaster relief operations and the value of Global Fleet Stations. The Strategic Objectives and Outcomes list—which included “establish favorable security conditions,” “secure strategic access and retain global freedom of action,” and “strengthen alliances and partnerships”—reflected a broader

⁶⁰ Ibid., 11.

⁶¹ Ibid., back cover.

understanding of the naval services' strategic effects and elevated the Navy's constabulary role in comparison to its warfighting and diplomatic ones.

The least that can be said for the Naval Operations Concept, whose practical impact on the fleet was minimal, was that it did get all of OPNAV on one page. The Marines used it to inform follow-on strategic statements, as did those in the Navy who developed *A Cooperative Strategy*.

H. CONCLUSION

Like the 2005 *National Defense Strategy*, the 2006 *National Security Strategy* was systemically oriented. By arguing that U.S. security and prosperity depended upon free markets and the spread of democracy, these documents pointed toward the broad ends of U.S. strategy. One might well ask, then, why the 2006 QDR was not at least philosophically more like them or *The National Strategy for Maritime Security*, for example, which did attempt to address how to link the spread of democracy and free-market ideals. The answer, of course, was that the rest of the government and the military were attempting to figure out how to prevail in Iraq. But Admiral Mullen's and Vice Admiral Morgan's desire to expand the understanding of American sea power in a way that related U.S. military force to the promotion of democracy and free and open markets was more at least arguably more in line with the White House's thinking than the Pentagon's.

By implicitly repudiating the United States' strategic behavior in Iraq and calling for a multi-lateral effort to maintain a stable U.S.-managed system, Mullen was furthering the White House's ostensible agenda more than it probably knew, certainly more so than those in OSD understood. What is clear, at least in retrospect, is that for the first time since the Cold War, the Navy had a CNO that was prepared to articulate and defend the maritime, as distinct from the purely naval, dimensions of U.S. strategy. Mullen's actions flew in the face of Secretary Rumsfeld's high-handed, Goldwater-Nichols-inspired decree that the Services had no business "doing strategy," a decree that

that could only drain the intellectual pool from which creative strategic concepts and strategic options could be drawn, this at a time when the United States was sorely in need of such.⁶²

In many ways, the philosophical debate between Admirals Mullen and Morgan on the one hand and Admiral Nathman on the other was more structural and less personality driven. It was not unusual for the Navy's component commands, which were commanded by three- and four-star admirals, to challenge OPNAV. Goldwater-Nichols had increased the power of the CINCs/combatant commanders and undermined the Services' stature, which bred a dismissive attitude among the combatant commands and their respective component commands toward the service chiefs and their staffs. In this respect, Goldwater-Nichols made it more difficult for the ideas and initiatives of the strategy section of OPNAV to be taken seriously.

The debate reflected differences in how OPNAV and U.S. Fleet Forces Command interpreted their own purpose and that of the other. Regardless of which CNO held office, OPNAV saw its purpose in terms of its Title 10 responsibility, which was to ensure the Navy is organized, manned, and equipped for combat operations. From OPNAV's perspective, the CNO was responsible for understanding the political winds of U.S. policy and articulating the Navy's purpose in a way that convinced American leaders and society of the Navy's institutional necessity and of the validity of its budgetary claims. In other words, to OPNAV, "strategy" encompassed how the Navy should be rationalized for purposes of preparing the Navy's budget submission or for the next QDR, for example.

In contrast, U.S. Fleet Forces Command did not care about how the Navy should be rationalized. It did care about its two primary roles of ensuring the fleet was trained and ready for a range of operational contingencies and of determining the Navy's

⁶² For a strident argument against Goldwater-Nichols and its deleterious effects, see Commander Bryan McGrath, U.S. Navy (Ret.), "The Unbearable Being of Jointness," U.S. Naval Institute *Proceedings* 136, no. 5 (May 2010): 40–43.

warfighting requirements. U.S. Fleet Forces Command determined how the fleet should be trained and composed. It was a major player in determining the requirements that drove the Navy's programs. These requirements were based on inputs from the Navy component commands, which, in turn, had been based partly on the requirements of the regional combatant commanders' major combat operations campaign plans and attendant warfighting requirements. Those warfighting requirements were then passed from U.S. Fleet Forces Command to OPNAV's N6/N7 (Warfare Requirements and Programs) and N8 (Resources, Requirements, and Assessments).

Admiral Nathman's and U.S. Fleet Forces Command's sense of ownership over the fleet and attempts at taking over the naval strategy development process was a byproduct of CNO Clark's tenure. The task of organizing, training, and equipping the Navy had become so complicated that Clark had seen fit to create a separate command outside of OPNAV's control as his executive agent. Nathman, a protégé of Clark, was simply carrying out what he thought were the responsibilities of U.S. Fleet Forces Command, which, by virtue of those operational and warfighting-focused responsibilities, saw the Navy's purpose in terms of the *ways* of naval operations and the *means* of the Navy's force structure. It is little wonder that Nathman argued that the responsibility for writing the Naval Operations Concept should reside with U.S. Fleet Forces Command, an argument whose merits should not be too readily dismissed.

Overall, the creation of U.S. Fleet Forces Command reinforced the Navy's focus on operations and resource management. Clark had not similarly expanded OPNAV's capability and capacity for strategic thinking. As a consequence, Mullen and Morgan were now struggling to provide a strategic conceptual counterweight to the operational mass that was U.S. Fleet Forces Command and indeed OPNAV itself as 80 percent of its billets were involved in programming and budgeting. In this sense, Mullen's Navy Strategic Plan was a new tool of governance. It allowed the CNO to broaden the analytical basis upon which programmatic decisions were made beyond operational-level capability gaps, most of which were in terms of the geographic combatant commanders' campaign plans, to include trends in the strategic environment and in U.S. declaratory

strategy. These trends were not drawn up by the resource-oriented N8 or the warfighting-focused U.S. Fleet Forces Command, but by Morgan's more systemically oriented Information, Plans, and Strategy (N3/N5) directorate.

Maintaining control over the Naval Operations Concept's development also provided Mullen and Morgan with a way to redefine how the Navy understood the purpose and meaning of the "fleet." That understanding was based on the institution's operational experiences, which had been changing since 9/11, at least for those smaller communities that were deployed about the world in population-centric missions and those of the surface community, who dealt with local authorities and peoples to a far greater degree than did aviators and submariners. A Naval Operations Concept that embraced these grass-roots experiences validated the need for more specialized constabulary capabilities. It demonstrated how the Navy was adapting operationally and politically, and captured how the very idea of sea power was changing.

XIII. A COOPERATIVE STRATEGY, 2007

A. MULLEN CALLS FOR A NEW MARITIME STRATEGY

In June 2006, at the Naval War College's annual Current Strategy Forum, Admiral Mullen called for a new maritime strategy. He noted that the *Maritime Strategy* of the 1980s had guided the Navy in uncertain times, but today's uncertainties and threats were of an altogether different sort rooted as they were in the Berlin Wall's collapse and the "unrelenting pace of globalization."¹ Like Vice Admiral Morgan, Mullen believed that globalization was the primary reason for a new maritime strategy. In particular, the CNO cited three of its effects: 1) the increasing interdependencies among nations, corporations, and societies brought about by expanding global markets and economies; 2) the increasing demands for energy; and 3) the unfettered flow of information across previously resilient cultural barriers. "So I am here to challenge you," Mullen noted, "First, to rid yourselves of the old notion—held by so many for so long—that maritime strategy exists solely to fight and win wars at sea, and the rest will take care of itself. In a globalized, flat world the rest matters a lot."²

By way of support, Mullen invoked the most famous American navalist, Alfred Thayer Mahan, whose ideas about decisive battle, Mullen argued, distracted from his more fundamental concern with how naval forces spread the benefits derived from expanding free markets and open societies.³ "Where the old *Maritime Strategy* focused on sea control," Mullen continued,

¹ Admiral Michael G. Mullen, remarks at the annual Current Strategy Forum (Naval War College, Newport, RI, June 14, 2006), 3, http://www.Navy.mil/Navydata/people/cno/Mullen/CNO_CSF140606.pdf. See also Lieutenant Colonel Brendan M. Greely Jr., U.S. Marine Corps (Ret.), "The CNO Calls for New Maritime Strategy," U.S. Naval Institute *Proceedings* 132, no. 7 (July 2006): 6.

² Ibid., 5. The "flat world" is a reference to Thomas L. Friedman's *The World Is Flat: A Brief History of the Twenty-first Century* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2005). This book, which was popular at the time, explained in easy-to-grasp terms the phenomenon of modern-day globalization, which, Friedman argues, is leveling the economic playing field and reducing barriers to communication, among others—hence "flattening."

³ Ibid., 6.

the new one must recognize that the economic tide of all nations rises—not when the seas are controlled by one—but rather when they are made safe and free for all. Today, the globalization of the world economy is truly an engine of hope for our children for all people. Globalization has driven down trends in hunger and poverty while sharply enhancing standards of living across the globe. In just half a century, free markets and representative governments have spread from less than 20 percent to benefit more than 60 percent of the world’s people.⁴

Echoing the new *National Security Strategy*, Mullen was identifying U.S. naval power—if not American power generally—with the advancement of democracy and prosperity.

It was Morgan’s task to develop the strategy. Morgan was to gather inputs from a wide variety of sources and venues and coordinate with component and fleet commanders. He was to draw-up a “comprehensive” process to develop the strategy, which would be executed over the next year, and would support the *National Security Strategy* and the *National Strategy for Maritime Security*. Moreover, he was to develop a strategic communications plan to “introduce, educate, and disseminate” the strategy.⁵

B. MORGAN’S EDUCATION CAMPAIGN

Vice Admiral Morgan sought to establish a dialogue to, in his words, cohere organizational thinking around a new “mental map” from which Navy officers could more readily discern the need to change the course of U.S. naval strategy and to catalyze strategic thinking beyond the requirements of naval combat.⁶ He sought to expand the perspectives of Navy admirals and get them to, in his words, “rethink” the Navy’s purpose in broader terms of global trade, capital flows, and the expansion of prosperity and conflict-dampening democratic ideals.

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Paragraph based on Chief of Naval Operations Admiral Michael G. Mullen, memo to Vice Admiral John G. Morgan Jr., Deputy CNO for Information, Plans, and Strategy (N3/N5), Subject: “New Navy Maritime Strategy,” July 17, 2006. (In the margin, Mullen had hand-written “This is a *very high priority* and should be given the time and resources to complete with all due speed.” [Emphasis in the original.]

⁶ Vice Admiral John G. Morgan Jr., U.S. Navy (Ret.), discussion with the author, March 10, 2010, Arlington, VA.

To that end, he gave a series of extraordinary presentations to Navy admirals throughout the summer of 2006. He explained how economics determined the fate of nations, arguing in essence that economic history was the backdrop of all history, and why globalization was changing the security calculus.⁷ In a globalizing era, the dominant features of international relations were economics and interdependency, and a nation's prosperity depended more and more upon a stable and functioning world system and on the universal acceptance of the United States' stabilizing role.⁸ During the Navy's Three- and Four-Star Conference and the All-Flag Officer Symposium in June 2006, for example, he showed a video clip from a Public Broadcasting Service series called *The Commanding Heights: The Battle for the World Economy*, which was based on the book of the same name by Daniel Yergin and Joseph Stanislaw.⁹ The series told what it called the "epic story" of the global economy's birth and recounted how gaining the "commanding heights" of trade, capital flows, and resources shaped the destinies of the great powers. To help them understand the rationale for a maritime strategy, Morgan quoted Samuel Palmisano, the head of IBM:

Among the most urgent of the challenges facing emergent global institutions in all spheres of society is global security and order. Without them, nothing is possible. Companies will only invest in global systems of production if they believe that the geopolitical relationships that enable their investments will be stable and lasting. Without such confidence, investment will collapse.¹⁰

⁷ Niall Ferguson, "The Ascent of Money," directed by Dewald Aukema, episode 1, "From Bullion to Bubbles," July 8, 2009 (New York, WNET, 2009), DVD. Available at <http://www.pbs.org/wnet/ascentofmoney/featured/the-ascent-of-money-episode-1-from-bullion-to-bubbles/44/>.

⁸ Paragraph based on Deputy CNO for Information, Plans, and Strategy (N3/N5) Vice Admiral John G. Morgan Jr., memo to Chief of Naval Operations Admiral Michael G. Mullen, Subject: "Development of New Maritime Strategy," June 30, 2006 and "Rethinking America's Maritime Strategy: Why, Why Now and How?," PowerPoint brief presented by Morgan at the Three- and Four-Star Conference, February 2007.

⁹ "Navy's Maritime Strategy," briefing presented by Vice Admiral John G. Morgan Jr. at the All-Flag Officers' Symposium, Annapolis, MD, June 20, 2006, slide 17. See Daniel Yergin and Joseph Stanislaw, *The Commanding Heights: The Battle for the World Economy* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1998). For the television series, see <http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/commandingheights/>.

¹⁰ Ibid., slide 20. The quote is from Samuel J. Palmisano, "The Globally Integrated Enterprise," *Foreign Affairs* 85 (May/June 2006): 135.

Morgan demanded that his audience “elevate the discussion” about the Navy’s purpose and think about how the navies of liberal states in the past had underwritten their financial success. He asked the audience to think about the “moral consequences of naval force to the world order,” which was a reference to Benjamin Friedman’s *The Moral Consequences of Economic Growth*.¹¹ Friedman argued that economic growth has positively shaped social and political behavior around the world, implying that high living standards and other indicators of progress, for example, should be considered strategic goals. Morgan asked the participants to think about how U.S. naval forces contributed to the perception of U.S. legitimacy around the world, and implored his listeners to reflect on three fundamental questions that, as he noted, Mahan had posed—1) what are the responsibilities of world power? 2) what are the enduring strengths of naval power? and 3) how have the strengths and weaknesses of naval forces shaped the history of nations and peoples?¹² Morgan proclaimed that this was the Navy’s moment, its test. He noted that “our noble endeavor [is to] avert a global economic catastrophic crisis; localize and limit conflict; and arise to our commanding heights [to] influence history.”¹³

Morgan also explained that Admiral Mullen wanted the strategy’s development to be defined by a “competition of ideas.” The CNO wanted an “inclusive,” “open,” transparent, and collaborative process, partly, perhaps, to ward off accusations that he or Morgan had shanghaied the process.¹⁴ To explain Mullen’s rationale, Morgan quoted James Surowiecki’s *The Wisdom of Crowds*:

¹¹ Benjamin M. Friedman, *The Moral Consequences of Economic Growth* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2005).

¹² “Navy’s Maritime Strategy,” slide 45.

¹³ *Ibid.*, slide 58.

¹⁴ Commander Bryan McGrath, U.S. Navy (Ret.), “Maritime Strategy 2007: The Team Leader Speaks,” on the blog *Steeljaw Scribe* (the blog of Captain C. “Will” Dossel, U.S. Navy [Ret.]—the former head of OPNAV N513 Strategy and Concepts), October 21, 2007, <http://steeljawscribe.com/2007/10/21/maritime-strategy-2007-the-team-leader-speaks>.

Groups are remarkably intelligent, and are often smarter than the smartest people in them....Diversity and Independence are keys to the wisdom of the crowd. *The best collective decisions are a product of disagreement and contest, not consensus and compromise....*Crowds often make the best judgments because they aggregate a wide range of opinions and diverse information, cancelling out bias and emotion.¹⁵

By structuring the process thus, Morgan was ensuring that the basis of knowledge that would inform the strategy's development would be broader and more historical and theoretical oriented than those of most naval leaders.

C. ORGANIZING FOR THE NEW MARITIME STRATEGY

The project to develop the new maritime strategy was by far the most comprehensive, inclusive, organized, and expensive of any of the Navy's post-Cold War era efforts to devise a strategic statement. Its venues included wargames, conferences, seminars, and symposia with the U.S. Naval War College, the Naval Postgraduate School, the Center for Naval Analyses, Lockheed-Martin, and Johns Hopkins University and its Applied Physics Laboratory, for example. Others included high-level "warfighter talks" between the senior leaders of the Navy, Marine Corps, and Coast Guard, international maritime security conferences, and the Navy's and Marine Corps's Three- and Four-Star Flag Officer conferences and All-Flag Officer conferences.¹⁶ They included bi-monthly discussions with those in OSD, the Joint Staff, the office of the secretary of the Navy, the mentors that formed the CNO Executive Panel, and even bloggers. Still others included visits to the leaders of the combatant commands, naval component commands, fleet commands, and of allied and partner navies. There was also a series of public outreach forums called "Conversations with the Country."

¹⁵ "Navy's Maritime Strategy," slide 46. See James Surowiecki, *The Wisdom of Crowds* (New York: Anchor, 2005), xi–xxi. Emphasis added.

¹⁶ For an overview of the process, see "Toward a New Maritime Strategy: Process Update and Discussion," PowerPoint brief presented by Peter Dombrowski of the Naval War College and Commander Bryan G. McGrath at the Maritime Security Conference on March 29, 2007, 2, slide 4.

A tri-service “Executive Committee” oversaw the project. The committee consisted of Vice Admiral Morgan, Lieutenant General James F. Amos, commanding general, Marine Corps Combat Development Command and the deputy commandant for Combat Development and Integration (and commandant of the Marine Corps, 2010–present), and Rear Admiral Joseph L. Nimmich, U.S. Coast Guard, who was the assistant commandant of the Coast Guard for Policy and Planning. In September 2006, the tri-service core writing team assembled under Commander Bryan G. McGrath, who was the coordinator and lead author of the strategy. He was the head of Morgan’s Strategic Actions group (not to be confused with the CNO’s Strategic Actions Group [N00Z]). Morgan’s group was an elite branch of officers that Morgan had hand-picked, few of who were from the Navy’s strategy community.¹⁷ The Strategic Actions group represented the Navy’s contribution to the core writing team.¹⁸ McGrath’s counterparts were Captain Sam Neill from the Coast Guard, and Colonel Doug King, U.S. Marine Corps, a veteran of numerous efforts to develop Marine Corps and Navy-Marine Corps documents, most recently the Naval Operations Concept.¹⁹

Of the project’s three main phases, the Naval War College would execute Phase I. This consisted of seminars, wargames, and workshops, the purpose of which was to develop a set of maritime strategy options, which would be pruned by the Executive Committee in March 2007. The core team took over for Phase II and III. Phase II would see the options refined and would end in June 2007 when the Executive Committee selected one option to forward to the three service chiefs for their approval. Phase III

¹⁷ Vice Admiral Morgan was not known for his efforts to shore up the strategy community’s health nor did he make systematic changes to extend his thinking beyond his tenure other than strategic statements like *A Cooperative Strategy*, which, for example, might have included changing how the Navy’s strategists are educated and detailed into the community’s billets.

¹⁸ The other members of the Strategic Actions Group included Lieutenant Commanders Audrey Snyder and Chris Sweeney, Lieutenant John Ennis, Commander Paul Tortora, and Captain James Taylor, and later Captain Dan Cloyd.

¹⁹ The Marine Corps team also included Colonel Robert Dobson, U.S. Marine Corps (Ret.) Lieutenant Colonel John C. Berry, U.S. Marine Corps (Ret.), who also was a veteran of such efforts, and Lieutenant Colonel Kelly P. Houlgate. The Coast Guard team included Commander John Caplis.

would see the core team write the actual document for presentation to the three chiefs for their signatures.

D. PHASE I: DEVELOPING THE MARITIME STRATEGY OPTIONS

Rear Admiral Jacob L. Shuford, the president of the Naval War College, oversaw Phase I, which was led by Robert C. “Barney” Rubel, a retired Navy captain and attack pilot who was the chairman of the war college’s wargaming department. Two weeks after the CNO’s visit, Vice Admiral Morgan had gone up the war college to provide them with detailed guidance. He reiterated the CNO’s guidance that the war college would start with a clean slate—its efforts would not be constrained by existing U.S. strategic guidance or assumptions about the fleet’s size or shape.²⁰ Rubel explained:

Consider our situation—the project was undertaken at the end of the Bush administration and our requirement was to look ahead twenty years. We could not responsibly make the assumption that current U.S. security strategy would remain in place, and there was no adequate way to predict the direction of the next administration’s policies.²¹

As Rubel acknowledged, in a period of uncertainty that had come to surround America’s place in the world during the waning years of the Bush administration, the CNO’s guidance that the Naval War College should start with a clean slate created a sense of intellectual freedom that directly shaped *A Cooperative Strategy*.²²

The centerpiece of Phase I was the Strategic Foundations War Game that ran from early September to mid-October 2006. The wargame was to produce a body of knowledge from which a variety of maritime strategy options would be derived. Four “Blue” teams represented diverging U.S. strategic approaches that might be adopted over the next twenty years. These were: 1) Primacy—in which the United States would seek to maintain its hegemony; 2) Selective Engagement—which focused on preventing large-

²⁰ Captain Robert C. Rubel, U.S. Navy (Ret.), “The New Maritime Strategy: The Rest of the Story,” *Naval War College Review* 61, no. 2 (Spring 2008): 70.

²¹ Ibid.

²² Ibid.

scale conflict among the major powers; 3) Cooperative Security—which saw the United States turn to international and multi-lateral institutions to provide security; and 4) Offshore Balancing—in which a semi-isolationist United States withdrew from alliances and balanced major powers from off-shore.²³ Each of the U.S. teams played against five “Red” teams—North Korea, Iran, China, Pakistan, and al-Qaeda. Each Red team, which developed its own grand strategy in advance, was instructed to demonstrate hostility to the United States only if American actions threatened to prevent them from achieving their own objectives. As Rubel noted, the approach was unusual as most wargames are based on worst-case scenarios.²⁴

As the game progressed through four turns of play, with the U.S. teams going first each time, it became apparent to the organizers that all the state actors, including China and North Korea, had an abiding interest in a smoothly functioning system.²⁵ Only the likes of al-Qaeda thought otherwise. Rubel, who had been looking for an organizing principle, a “kernel” upon which to base the new maritime strategy, something like containment was for the Cold War, had found it. This was the idea of defending the American-designed system of global trade and security. As Rubel noted, the game “produced the ‘big idea’ that the protection of the existing global system of trade and security (as opposed to the process of globalization) provided both the context for the new strategy and the intellectual glue that tied together all regions of the world.”²⁶

Given the lack of hostility on the part of other states in the game, it was difficult for the U.S. teams to contemplate a threat-based strategic approach.²⁷ “Instead,” Rubel noted, “we realized we had opportunities to disrupt the flow of events toward war....what

²³ Ibid.

²⁴ Ibid., 71.

²⁵ Ibid.

²⁶ Rubel, “The New Maritime Strategy,” 71–72. Rubel was referring specifically to the fact that at an earlier seminar, several of those that had developed the *Maritime Strategy* of the 1980s had remarked that the Navy’s post-Cold War strategic statements lacked context and an “intellectual glue” that related naval operations in the Western Pacific to those in the Middle East, for example.

²⁷ Ibid., 72.

I call ‘opportunity based’ planning—positioning the maritime services to take positive actions to prevent war, protect the global system, and create a better peace.”²⁸ Also on their minds was the CNO’s guidance. Apart from his desire to “elevate the discussion,” Mullen had indicated that the new strategy would not discuss force structure, a decision backed by the commandants of the Marine Corps and Coast Guard.²⁹

To guide the development of the maritime strategy options, the organizers drew up four “National Security Objectives” and eight “Geo-Strategic Assumptions.”³⁰ The four were: 1) protect the U.S. homeland; 2) prevent the proliferation and use of weapons of mass destruction; 3) hedge against the emergence of near-peer competitors; and 4) maintain the free flow of commerce, including energy. The eight assumptions were: 1) the global commons (sea, air, space, cyberspace) remain important for U.S. national security and economic prosperity;³¹ 2) not all threats to the United States are strategic; 3) China’s relative importance in global politics will increase because of economic and military growth, making it the only credible potential near-peer competitor; 4) the threat of attack from terrorists will be low in terms of probability, but high in terms of costs should an attack occur; 5) access to Persian Gulf energy resources is essential for the global economy; 6) potential foes will seek to counter the United States’ conventional superiority; 7) states will seek weapons of mass destruction to address regional threats or to neutralize U.S. military advantages; and 8) U.S. maritime forces will maintain a strategic deterrence capability.

²⁸ Ibid.

²⁹ Lieutenant John Ennis, U.S. Navy Reserve, “Inside the New Maritime Strategy,” U.S. Naval Institute *Proceedings* 135, no. 12 (December 2009): 69. Ennis worked for Commander Bryan G. McGrath as a member of the Navy’s core writing team.

³⁰ Paragraph based on “Maritime Strategy Options (MSO),” PowerPoint brief presented by President of the Naval War College Rear Admiral Jacob L. Shuford and Captain Robert C. Rubel, U.S. Navy (Ret.) to the Executive Committee, March 20, 2007, slides 3–6.

³¹ For a study of the importance of the global commons to U.S. prosperity and associated sea, air, space, and cyberspace access challenges, see Abraham M. Denmark and James Mulvenon, eds. *Contested Commons: The Future of American Power in a Multipolar World* (Washington, DC: Center for New American Security, January 25, 2010), <http://www.cnas.org/node/4012>.

After the game, the organizers spent two months sifting through the data before starting to deduce maritime strategy options from it. They came up with five options.

1. Option Alpha: Maintain Winning Combat Power Forward

Option Alpha was called *Maintain Winning Combat Power Forward*, which accorded to the Primacy strategic approach. It represented the status quo of U.S. naval strategy and mainstream institutional thinking. In analyzing it, however, one has difficulty understanding how it could be construed as a “maritime strategy” as traditionally understood.³² It did not view the world or locate U.S. vital interests in systemic terms. Nor did it admit to the centrality of globalization. In fact, it essentially argued that globalization did not matter either because it was not fundamentally changing the security calculus or it was not durable enough to require a drastic change in the direction of U.S. naval strategy.

Option A saw the world as a collection of independent regions, each filled with distinct potential foes. It saw the purpose of sea power as to coercively shape states’ behavior, overcome anti-access strategies, and prevail in major combat operations. These high-end scenarios highlighted the virtues of joint warfighting from the seas and in the littoral, and aimed to keep a power such as China from cordoning off areas of the sea for its own economic use.³³ *Maintain Winning Combat Power Forward* maintained that the Navy’s two major hubs of operations, the north Arabian Sea/Persian Gulf and northeast Asia, would be preeminent. In terms of U.S. naval operations, the other theaters would be characterized by an “economy of force.” In terms of means and capabilities, as it noted, Option A’s areas of emphasis were, in priority order: 1) forward maritime presence; 2) power projection; and 3) sea control.

³² Of note, the author could find only one document from the strategy-development effort that contained a definition of a “maritime strategy,” which came from an undated PowerPoint brief entitled “Maritime Strategy Options” that was developed in February or March 2006. It was rather loosely defined as the “overarching logic of how the seas will be used to secure the interests of the Republic.” “Maritime Strategy Options,” undated PowerPoint brief, slide 3.

³³ Paragraph based on Rubel, “The New Maritime Strategy,” 76; “Maritime Strategy Options (MSO),” slides 7–16; and McGrath, “Team Leader Speaks.”

2. Option Bravo: The High-Low Force Structure

Option Bravo was inserted late in the process by Wayne P. Hughes Jr., a highly respected professor at the Naval Postgraduate School and the author of the seminal *Fleet Tactics and Coastal Combat*, which examined historical and contemporary fleet tactics from a broad operational analysis perspective.³⁴ Hughes's "high-low" approach argued for the need to address both emerging high-end state-based threats and low-end irregular threats.³⁵ Specifically, the approach sought to enhance high-end capabilities needed to defeat emerging anti-access strategies, of the Chinese, for example, while trading "legacy" platforms designed for major combat operations for new capabilities that were designed to address the emerging low-end threats. These new capabilities included a fleet of small littoral warfighting ships and networks that could tie the world's navies and coast guards together. Hughes argued for improving constabulary functions and building partnership capacity to counter low-end threats, which highlighted the Coast Guard's role. If *Maintain Winning Combat Power Forward's* approach was unilateralist, hegemonic, and offensive minded, Hughes's Option Bravo was internationalist, systemic, and was defensive minded, at least in terms of defending the status quo of the U.S.-managed system. Its areas of emphasis were: 1) sea control; 2) forward maritime presence; 3) homeland defense/security; and 4) power projection.

3. Option Charlie: Off-Shore Balancing

Option Charlie was *Off-Shore Balancing*, which reflected the wargame's strategic approach of the same name. Here, U.S. naval forces would only be deployed to the Persian Gulf. The rest of the fleet would be recalled and maintained in readiness to surge as needed. It assumed that no Eurasian state would rise to a peer or "near-peer" status for at least 10 to 15 years, and, with the exception of energy crises, that regional crises would

³⁴ Captain Wayne P. Hughes Jr., U.S. Navy (Ret.), *Fleet Tactics and Coastal Combat* (1986: Annapolis, MD: U.S. Naval Institute, 2000).

³⁵ Rest of paragraph based on Rubel, "The New Maritime Strategy," 76; "Maritime Strategy Options (MSO)," slides 17–27; and McGrath, "Team Leader Speaks."

be resolved in ways that the United States could tolerate.³⁶ It further assumed that “Peace is best assured by encouraging traditional allies to take more responsibility for their own defense....[and] Diplomatic, political, and economic outreach will often prove more influential than military engagement.”³⁷

Off-Shore Balancing was a minimalist strategy from the Navy’s perspective, one that relied heavily on the United States’ ability to wield its diplomatic and economic instruments.³⁸ It assumed that the system was largely able to maintain itself and reconcile inter-state differences without forcible U.S. intervention. At the same time, with the exception of the Persian Gulf, *Off-Shore Balancing* was all about (surged) warfighting—not coercive diplomacy or constabulary operations. Savings gained by recalling the fleet would be used to retain the force structure in the face of budget cuts, improve the fleet’s surge capability, and invest in advanced technology that would be needed in the future. As it stated, its areas of emphasis were: 1) strategic deterrence (including air and missile defense); 2) forward maritime presence; 3) maritime security cooperation; 4) crisis response; and 5) power projection.

4. Option Delta: Securing the Global Commons

Option Delta made *Securing the Global Commons* the Navy’s primary mission.³⁹ This option, which reflected Barney Rubel’s personal outlook, stated that the United States could not assume maritime supremacy in every situation in every part of the world. In other words, the ability of the United States to control the seas was diminishing in the face of technological developments like ballistic anti-ship missiles, a shrinking force structure, and new legal norms of a political and economic nature that governed the

³⁶ Paragraph based on Rubel, “The New Maritime Strategy,” 76; “Maritime Strategy Options (MSO),” slides 28–38; and McGrath, “Team Leader Speaks.”

³⁷ “Maritime Strategy Options (MSO),” 30.

³⁸ Paragraph based on Rubel, “The New Maritime Strategy,” 76; “Maritime Strategy Options (MSO),” slides 28–38; and McGrath, “Team Leader Speaks.”

³⁹ Paragraph based on Rubel, “The New Maritime Strategy,” 76–77; “Maritime Strategy Options (MSO),” slides 39–50; and McGrath, “Team Leader Speaks.”

control of the world's oceans. It assumed that non-state actors would attempt to use the seas for their own purposes, and that maritime choke points and trade routes were still strategically significant enough to warrant a strong focus on sea control and sea denial. *Securing the Global Commons* sought to integrate other navies into the United States' sea control and sea denial operations. It also sought to improve the ability of developing nations to police their own areas. In essence, *Securing the Global Commons* operationalized the 1,000-Ship Navy and Maritime Domain Awareness concepts. It was internationalist and defensive minded, while recognizing the continued reality of U.S. hegemony. In essence, it was less an overarching maritime strategy than the operational embodiment of the *Global System* option, which sought to organize how that strategy was to function in peace and war. Clearly it was systemic in nature. Its areas of emphasis were: 1) sea control; 2) forward maritime presence; 3) homeland defense/security; and 4) power projection.

5. Option Echo: Global System

Option Echo was *Global System*, almost certainly inserted into the process by McGrath, probably with the concurrence of Rubel and Morgan. Of the five, *Global System* had the broadest perspective, the one most reflective of a holistic maritime strategic approach. If *Maintain Winning Combat Power Forward* faithfully represented Admiral Nathman's views, then *Global System* came about as close as any to representing Morgan's and Mullen's. Truth be told, *Global System* probably reflected more the thinking of McGrath, whose thinking focused less on promoting economic and political integration for its own sake than on preventing major wars like the First World War that had brought about the collapse of the international system.

Global System and *Maintain Winning Combat Power Forward* represented two fundamentally different approaches. *Global System* was associated with the wargame's Selective Engagement strategic approach, which saw the world in terms of continents, trade, capital flows, and alliances. To *Global System*, the United States drew most of its power and influence from its role as the system's manager and protector.

Global System argued that the greatest threat to the stability and the continuation of the U.S.-managed global system was great power war. Consequently, it argued that “Avoiding great power war assumes the same priority as fighting and winning wars.”⁴⁰ *Global System* argued that maritime forces have a unique role in preventing wars of a kind that might bring about the system’s collapse. These forces deterred “great power war” by forward deploying “credible combat power” to keep local and regional wars from expanding, and by working to establish trust and confidence in American protection through “persistent, culturally-aware shaping operations.”⁴¹ *Global System* argued that maritime forces knitted multilateral interests together and prevented small wars from escalating in ways that armies and air forces could not. It subscribed to the belief, articulated by Daniel Moran, that “Large and small wars now seem to encircle and engender each other, to the point where there is little reason to be good at the first if you are not also good at the second.”⁴²

Global System blended and otherwise put into broader perspective *Maintain Winning Combat Power Forward* and *Securing the Global Commons*. It blended the former’s need for forward deployed combat power to deter conflict and build confidence in U.S. management of the system with the latter’s need to assure U.S. access and protect

⁴⁰ “Maritime Strategy Options (MSO),” 52.

⁴¹ Ibid. Reflecting emerging thinking on the part of at least some in the defense establishment, *Global Systems* argued for a broader, and less coercive-minded understanding of “deterrence,” which was articulated by Geoffrey Till: “The coercive approach of demonstrating denial capabilities against, or promising punishment for, prospective wrongdoers has been absorbed into a much wider concept of working against the social, environmental, and economic conditions that make wrongdoing more likely.” Till, “A View from Outside,” 28. The emergence of this broader, more “preventative” approach stems from the realization that actually deterring martyrdom-bent terrorists, who, for example, fly hijacked commercial aircraft into buildings and detonate suicide vests, is difficult. In terms of *A Cooperative Strategy*, Till’s “wider concept” is found in the term “prevention,” as in *A Cooperative Strategy*’s statement that “preventing war is as important as winning war” (emphasis in the original)—which should not be construed to mean the same as “detering war is as important as winning war.” *A Cooperative Strategy for 21st Century Seapower*, Chief of Naval Operations Admiral Gary Roughead, Commandant of the Marine Corps General James T. Conway, and Commandant of the Coast Guard Admiral Thad W. Allen (Department of the Navy, Office of the Chief of Naval Operations, Washington, DC, October 2007), 2.

⁴² Daniel J. Moran, “Stability Operations: The View From Afloat,” in *Naval Peacekeeping and Humanitarian Operations: Stability from the Sea*, ed. James J. Wirtz and Jeffrey A. Larsen (New York: Routledge, 2008), 16.

the maritime-based infrastructure upon which global markets depend. *Global System's* areas of emphasis were: 1) strategic deterrence (including missile and air defense); 2) forward maritime presence; 3) maritime security cooperation; 4) crisis response; and 5) power projection.

In mid-January 2007, Rear Admiral Shuford and Barney Rubel pitched the five options to the Executive Committee, which gave them two months to refine them. The mid-March meeting saw the elimination of Hughes's option, whose high-low mix was thought to be inherent in the surviving options, along with *Off-Shore Balancing*, whose rejection of forward deployment did not comport with the need to differentiate the Navy from the Army and the Air Force. Nor did it accord with Mullen's desire to base a strategy upon Mahan's three enduring naval strengths: 1) the ability to influence events abroad; 2) to anticipate and respond flexibly to events; and 3) to cultivate partnerships and friendships.

E. CONVERSATIONS WITH THE COUNTRY

Meanwhile, Conversations with the Country were getting underway. The first round started in November 2006 and ended in June 2007. The conversations were Admiral Mullen's idea. They took the form of a series of one-day public forums involving senior flag officers from the Navy, Marine Corps, and Coast Guard, professors from the Naval War College, and members of the core team. Round one consisted of seven large-scale symposia (which averaged 175 attendees) and three smaller senior executive seminars (which had 15–20 participants from Fortune 100-level corporations).⁴³ Ostensibly, this extensive outreach program was designed to bring together a cross section of Americans—almost invariably business leaders, civic leaders, retired military, interested citizens and college students—in order to expose them to the issues of maritime security, engage them in dialogue about U.S. security, and encourage

⁴³ Round One symposia were in Newport, RI, Phoenix, Atlanta, Seattle, San Francisco, Chicago, and New York while the senior executive seminars were held at the Global Innovation and Strategy Center in Omaha, NE, the George H. W. Bush School at Texas A&M University in College Station, TX, and at the U.S. Naval Academy in Annapolis, MD.

them to continue their involvement after the event. As Commander McGrath noted, “We never wavered from the central proposition that we were there to listen.”⁴⁴

In practice, however, *Conversations with the Country* sought to make the case that sea power was important to the nation’s prosperity and security. This was particularly true with the second round, which started after the release of *A Cooperative Strategy* and ended in September 2008.⁴⁵ The Navy was making its case at a time when the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan dominated the headlines and when, according to Gallup, Americans believed the Navy and Coast Guard to be irrelevant.⁴⁶

In their interactions, Morgan and the core writing team learned three things. As noted in *A Cooperative Strategy*’s preface, they learned that Americans “want us to remain strong; they want us to protect them and their homeland, and they want us to work with partners around the world to prevent war.”⁴⁷ But some learned more. At first, McGrath did not see much value in *Conversations with the Country*. But increasingly he did, if for no other reason than it revealed how Navy officers suffer from a lack of knowledge about what Americans thought about their Navy and strategy in general. “I’ve spent a goodly part of the past 21 years working the edges of the empire,” he noted.

I just naturally assumed that the American public knew what we were doing out there and that they had some appreciation for why we do it. I was shocked at how wrong I was...my strongest take-away from the early conversations was that Homeland Defense and National Defense were the exact same thing to most of the people in the audience.... I did not discern

⁴⁴ McGrath, “Team Leader Speaks.”

⁴⁵ Round Two symposia were in Miami, Houston, Portland, Oregon, Denver, Los Angeles, and Raleigh, North Carolina. The fourth senior executive seminar was held at the Wharton School, University of Pennsylvania. Round Two also saw a series of Campus Conversations, which were held at the University of Miami, Rice University, Oregon State University, the University of Denver, the University of Southern California, and Duke University. For a critique of *Conversations with the Country*, see Steven Cohen, “Marketing is Not a Dirty Word,” U.S. Naval Institute *Proceedings* 134, no. 2 (February 2008): 34–39.

⁴⁶ Gallup, Gallup Poll, “Which Branch of the Armed Forces Is Most Important?” *Gallup News Service*, May 27, 2004, www.gallup.com/poll/1666/Military-National-Defense.aspx. When asked in May 2004 which service was the most important to U.S. security, 9 percent said the Navy. The Army, Marine Corps, and Air Force essentially tied at 24 percent, while the Coast Guard registered 4 percent.

⁴⁷ Roughead, Conway, and Allen, *A Cooperative Strategy*, 1.

a great deal of understanding as to why we were forward deployed around the world. There was only a vague sense of the importance of the Navy.⁴⁸

McGrath's assumption that Americans understood more than they actually did about the Navy was, of course, an institutionally inbred one. Although he did not state it, McGrath had to reflect on how difficult it would be to explain the merits of a maritime strategy to a society that equated national security with protecting the homeland from threats.

F. PHASE II: REFINING AND NARROWING THE OPTIONS

After the Executive Committee meeting in mid-March 2006, Commander McGrath emailed the remaining strategic options—*Maintain Winning Combat Power Forward*, *Securing the Global Commons*, and *Global System*—to all of the Navy's three- and four-star admirals and all the combatant commanders for comment.⁴⁹ After the core team adjudicated their inputs, McGrath then asked the three- and four-star admirals to respond to four questions:

1) Which [option] is closest to the way you think? 2) Of the other two, what ideas are most attractive to you? 3) Of the one you chose, what ideas would you like to de-emphasize or eliminate? And 4) What trends do you think are most like[ly] to influence maritime affairs in the next twenty years?⁵⁰

The admirals and their staffs had four or five days to respond, in contrast with the two or three weeks that was the norm for the Navy's strategic statements. As McGrath noted, their comments revealed that there were, unlike those between the other two services' respective leaders, "significant" differences in opinion between the Navy admirals.⁵¹

The differences were familiar. On one side were aviators with backgrounds in the Pacific, which meant they had spent years grappling with how to address the threats posed by China and North Korea. Foremost among these was Admiral Nathman, who

⁴⁸ McGrath, "Team Leader Speaks."

⁴⁹ Ibid.

⁵⁰ Ibid.

⁵¹ Ibid.

would retire in May 2007, and Admiral Robert F. “Rat” Willard, a fighter pilot who had been vice CNO before taking over the U.S. Pacific Fleet in May 2007. On the other side were surface warfare officers with operational backgrounds in the European and Atlantic theaters like Admirals Henry G. “Harry” Ulrich III, the commander of U.S. Naval Forces Europe, and Jim Stavridis, the commander of U.S. Southern Command (and later of U.S. European Command), who was a long-standing member of the Navy’s strategy community and its acknowledged leader.

In his *Proceedings* article, Lieutenant John Ennis, who worked for McGrath, described what he thought were the project’s five most contentious issues. The first was whether the new strategy should address force structure. Those in OSD, the Joint Staff, and the office of the secretary of the Navy argued that it should. As Ennis pointed out, “The ends, ways, and means methodology of strategy development, so firmly ingrained in military minds, forced many to conclude that a strategy without resources is not a strategy.”⁵² But from the outset, the CNO stated that the effort to develop a new strategy would not deal with force structure, and essentially banned any such discussion.⁵³ As the Navy’s core representatives understood it, Navy leaders intended to release an associated force structure plan within six months after the strategy’s release.⁵⁴ To Mullen and Morgan, the lesson of the 3/1 Strategy was clear—given the fundamental differences among the Navy leaders, strategic consensus would not be achieved if the dialogue included how the fleet should be balanced.

The second issue was whether the new maritime strategy should be a Navy-only document or a tri-service one. As Ennis noted, “To categorize this issue as contentious would be an understatement and would minimize the intensity of the emotions of those involved.”⁵⁵ The argument was that having co-signatories would, in the words of Ennis,

⁵² Ennis, “Inside the New Maritime Strategy,” 69.

⁵³ Ennis, “Inside the New Maritime Strategy,” 69 and Rubel, “The New Maritime Strategy,” 72.

⁵⁴ Commander Bryan McGrath, U.S. Navy (Ret.), discussion with the author, February 14, 2011, Arlington, VA.

⁵⁵ Ennis, “Inside the New Maritime Strategy,” 69.

“deemphasize the Navy’s role in the missions detailed in the document, which makes a case for reduced force structure at the very least.”⁵⁶ It is difficult to understand why this issue was so contentious as from the outset, Mullen directed that all three service chiefs would sign the document, the knowledge of which did not stop particularly one Navy four-star admiral, who remained adamant that it should be a Navy-only document.⁵⁷

After the second round of comments was adjudicated in early May 2006, the core writing team took the elements of each of the three options that appeared to command the greatest consensus and knitted a “hybrid” strategy. With such a wide divergence of opinion on which option was the best, it had become increasingly apparent that senior leaders would only approve a blended “best of breed” strategy. McGrath, for one, had foreseen this, which explains why he had asked the admirals to identify the most attractive elements in their preferred options as a way to locate areas of consensus.

The hybrid strategy was based on *Global System*. As McGrath noted, it took *Global System*’s “big idea” of the system and the need to protect it, *Maintain Winning Combat Power Forward*’s status quo focus on regional conflict in the Persian Gulf and the Western Pacific, and *Securing the Global Commons*’ need for sea control and collective security.⁵⁸ Unlike the unilateralist *Maintain Winning Combat Power Forward*, however, the hybrid strategy was cooperative, which is, for all intents and purposes, a defining element of any maritime strategy particularly under modern conditions. After one last round with the four-star admirals, the team forwarded its framework to the three service chiefs, who approved it in early June 2007, thus opening the way to start writing the document.

⁵⁶ Ibid.

⁵⁷ One of these was Admiral Thad W. Allen, the well-respected Coast Guard commandant, who had adroitly handled several high-profile natural disasters. Allen’s signature would in itself lend much credibility to the strategy. Mullen’s direction was captured in a memorandum signed by Vice Admiral John G. Morgan Jr., Lieutenant General James F. Amos, and Rear Admiral Joseph L. Nimmich, U.S. Coast Guard, Memorandum, Subject: “Terms of Reference for Maritime Security Development,” unpublished photocopy, undated (believed to have been signed in October 2006 or January 2007).

⁵⁸ McGrath, “Team Leader Speaks.”

G. PHASE III: WRITING THE NEW MARITIME STRATEGY

There was one problem, however. In early June 2007, Secretary of Defense Robert M. Gates, who had replaced Donald Rumsfeld in December 2006, announced that Admiral Mullen would replace the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, Marine General Peter Pace, on October 1, 2007. The project was now up in the air. As Commander McGrath noted,

It became obvious that [Mullen] was not going to be able to sign the document, and that it would be left to his successor to determine *if* he would follow-through with the work ongoing and more importantly, stay to the time line we had been advertising—that was, a roll out at the International Seapower Symposium in Newport in October [2007].⁵⁹

Still, the writing team pressed on. The three primary writers, Commander McGrath, Colonel King, and Captain O'Neill, would individually go off and write, then gather the next day to edit each other's drafts. By all accounts they got along remarkably well. Discussions were at times passionate but they were not marked by the kind of rancor that had beset previous Navy-Marine Corps efforts.

During the summer of 2007—which saw the team vet the draft four or five times with the three services' leaders—two more of Lieutenant Ennis's contentious issues arose. The first was about how the document should refer to what the Bush administration called “the Global War on Terror,” which was a politically charged term that the three services did not wish to haul uninvited into the next administration, which would be chosen in a year and a half. Selecting the right term was a delicate matter.

One Navy four-star admiral supported the term “Islamic extremists,” as did all the Marine Corps generals.⁶⁰ As Ennis noted, “One Marine four-star...held his support of the entire document based on what he felt was the appropriate characterization of extremism.”⁶¹ Ennis pointed out that the Navy preferred what he called a “mixed

⁵⁹ Ibid. Emphasis added.

⁶⁰ Ennis, “Inside the New Maritime Strategy,” 70.

⁶¹ Ibid.

message,” one that called out “Islamic extremism on one hand while seeking to cultivate relationships and alliances on the other.”⁶² Clearly, several admirals were worried about the potential divisive effects of employing the term “Islamic” in a strategy that styled itself cooperative in nature. Finally, late in the summer, the team discovered that OSD had taken to using the more neutral term “terrorist networks,” a term that all agreed upon.⁶³

The second issue was whether or not the document should, in Ennis’s words, “call out” China. OSD had done so in several recent documents, notably the 2006 QDR. The Navy’s supporters in Congress were also asking that the Navy itself be more cognizant of the emerging threat from China.⁶⁴ At that time (and after), China was raising the ire of its neighbors and the United States by aggressively defending its expansive territorial claims in the international waters of the South China Sea. China also alarmed the United States and its allies by developing and resourcing an “anti-access strategy,” which aimed to keep U.S. forces from projecting power in the Western Pacific. In the end, the three services’ senior leaders agreed not to name China for two reasons: “The first,” as Ennis noted,

was the centrality of the global system to the strategy and the critical cooperative relationships with like-minded nations in fostering and sustaining that system. Simply put, China has a huge stake in having the global system function smoothly. Crafting a strategy that invited them to maintain the system, rather than needlessly antagonizing them, seemed appropriate.⁶⁵

As McGrath noted,

I believe the strategy presented the Chinese with an interesting dilemma; do they get with the program, recognize that the global system in place handsomely rewards their people, and pony up to the responsibilities of a

⁶² Ibid.

⁶³ Ibid.

⁶⁴ Ibid., 71.

⁶⁵ Ibid.

first-rate nation in terms of contributing to that system's protection and sustainment, or do they remain neo-mercantilist free-riders, fattening their coffers due in no small part to the largess of the U.S. Navy (and subject to its continued forbearance)?⁶⁶

Second, as all agreed, the Chinese were sure to read themselves in the document regardless.⁶⁷ There were other reasons as well. As demonstrated in the Strategic Foundations War Game, a threat-centric strategy that framed China as a likely adversary was unpalatable for many U.S. allies and partners. Moreover, Congress would see it as a means to leverage more high-end weapons systems.

At this point, another roadblock appeared, this more serious than the rest. Secretary of the Navy Donald C. Winter (2006–09) had gotten wind of what was in the draft and reportedly threatened to shut down the project if the team did not downplay the draft's soft power message. At issue was the ordering of the strategy's six "strategic imperatives," which Ennis had identified as his fifth and last contentious issue. These imperatives were rooted in Mahan's three enduring naval strengths that CNO Mullen had brought up: 1) the ability to influence events abroad; 2) to anticipate and respond flexibly to events; and 3) to establish and maintain partnerships and friendships. As Ennis noted, the imperatives were keyed "to increasing levels of complexity and violence."⁶⁸ The list was as follows: 1) "Foster and sustain cooperative relationships with more international partners"; 2) "Prevent or contain local disruptions before they impact the global system"; 3) "Limit regional conflict with forward-deployed, decisive maritime power"; 4) "Deter major-power war"; and 5) "Win our nation's wars"; as well as 6) "Contribute to

⁶⁶ Commander Bryan McGrath, U.S. Navy (Ret.), "Thoughts on 'A Cooperative Strategy for 21st Century Seapower' Two Year's Later: Author's Response," entry on the blog *Steeljaw Scribe*, October 21, 2009, <http://steeljawscribe.com/2009/10/21/thoughts-on-a-cooperative-strategy-for-21st-century-seapower-two-years-later-authors-response#more-3692>.

⁶⁷ In his article, Ennis noted that Andrew Erickson, from the Naval War College's China Maritime Studies Institute, later confirmed the Chinese did read themselves into the document. As Ennis noted that the Chinese reactions "were largely predictable, with a certain amount of attention paid to the document's description of a 'multipolar' world (they [the Chinese] liked this) and a sense of foreboding over the object of all this 'cooperation.'" Ennis, "Inside the New Maritime Strategy," 71.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, 70.

homeland defense in depth” being woven through each.⁶⁹ The ordering was arranged along the gradient from peace to war, and was intended to reflect the logic of how the U.S. maritime services would protect American interests. It was contested because it implicitly seemed to be setting priorities that would determine the fleet’s composition, size, and posture.

According to Ennis, the order of the six imperatives was based on two premises. First, “One of the fundamental strategic notions advanced in this document was to protect and sustain a global system with like-minded maritime nations. Placing this imperative first reinforced a firm commitment to the idea.”⁷⁰ The preeminence of that imperative, which was the strategy’s backbone, acknowledged the fundamental reality of governance in a globalizing era. As Niall Ferguson has observed, “The paradox of globalization is that as the world becomes more integrated, so power becomes more diffuse.”⁷¹ Second, the model reflected the unique ability of sea power to modulate force as a way to escalate and de-escalate crises.⁷² Nevertheless, this model was “scrapped” because, as Ennis noted, “Navy leadership became concerned that it overemphasized ‘soft power’” and was replaced by a “radically” new one that reflected the views of Mullen’s replacement, Admiral Gary Roughead (2007–11).⁷³

H. ROUGHEAD’S MODEL

Admiral Roughead was a surface warfare officer who had spent much of his career in the Pacific. He had been the executive assistant to the commander of U.S. Pacific Command as a captain and its deputy commander as a three-star admiral. Before he replaced the retiring Admiral Nathman in May 2007 as the head of U.S. Fleet Forces Command, he commanded the U.S. Pacific Fleet for nearly two years. Roughead, who

⁶⁹ Ibid.

⁷⁰ Ibid.

⁷¹ Niall Ferguson, *Colossus: The Price of America’s Empire* (New York: Penguin, 2004), 298.

⁷² Ennis, “Inside the New Maritime Strategy,” 70.

⁷³ Ibid.

had entered the Navy in 1973, had spent comparatively less time in the Pentagon than his predecessors, yet had been the head of the Navy Department's Office of Legislative Affairs, which meant that he knew what it took to get congressional support for the Navy's programs and initiatives.

It quickly became apparent that Roughead shared Secretary Winter's belief about the need to emphasize the Navy's warfighting virtues.⁷⁴ Nevertheless, Roughead also believed in the new strategy and in the importance of low-end missions. In the two months before taking over, Roughead worked closely with Commander McGrath's team, and one day he described a Venn diagram that captured how he wanted the team to relate the six imperatives.⁷⁵ (See Figure 12.)



Figure 12. Admiral Roughead's Venn Diagram⁷⁶

⁷⁴ Secretary of the Navy Winter commissioned numerous classified and unclassified studies to refute the resource implications of *A Cooperative Strategy*. One of these was Jerome Burke (project leader), Grant Sharp, Alfred Kaufman, and Patricia Cohen, "Assessment of Naval Core Capabilities" (Alexandria, VA: Institute for Defense Analyses, January 2009).

⁷⁵ McGrath, discussion with the author.

⁷⁶ "The New Maritime Strategy," PowerPoint brief presented by Commander Bryan G. McGrath at the Center for Naval Analyses, Alexandria, VA, December 2007, slide 13.

Befitting its title, the top ellipse was about concentrating power in two key regions, the Western Pacific and the Persian Gulf/Indian Ocean. Its imperatives were those most closely associated with state-based threats and major combat operations: 1) Deter Major-Power War; 2) Limit Regional Conflict with Forward-Deployed, Decisive Maritime Power; and 3) Win Our Nation's Wars. The bottom ellipse was about distributing the rest of the fleet to non-traditional areas to do non-traditional missions.

This straightforward division of labor reflected the perspective of the U.S. Pacific Fleet commander, which is what Roughead had been. Its theater of operations, which stretches from California to Pakistan, encompasses many high-end threats, notably China, while its engagement plan is the most comprehensive, extensive, and mature of any of the Navy's component commands. The model also reflected Roughead's understanding of what would be required to implement the strategy. Here one can see more clearly why he was selected as Mullen's successor. Secretary of the Navy Winter wanted a CNO that would act on shared beliefs about the high end, while Mullen, the next chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, wanted someone with the motivation and skills to move the strategy beyond the declaratory stage. Both were looking for a CNO whose skills were of an eminently practical sort. Roughead fit the bill. As a former Navy component commander, he understood how to link strategy to operational effects. As the former head of the Navy Department's Office of Legislative Affairs, he was adept at working with Congress. As a surface warfare officer with a Pacific background, he saw both sides of the internal debate and had the skills to maintain the consensus.

The force structure implications of Roughead's model were clear. By placing the warfighting and coercive diplomacy ellipse above the systemic constabulary one, Roughead's model implied that high-end resource requirements came first, and, given the overlap between the ellipses, that such capabilities could serve the bottom imperatives to some extent. Still, the mere presence of the lower ellipse, which was identically sized, argued for platforms specifically intended to serve its imperatives. For his part, McGrath expected that the forthcoming resource plan would resource the bottom ellipse with smaller, lightly armed, and cheaper, more mass produced ships, which should not come at

the expense of the high-end capabilities.⁷⁷ All of which is to say, from Roughead's perspective, that the previous model was not clear enough about how the fleet should be employed, balanced, and rationalized—which of course is how Navy officers understand naval strategy.

I. A COOPERATIVE STRATEGY—THE ENDS

In October 2007, Admiral Roughead, Commandant of the Coast Guard Admiral Thad W. Allen (2006–10), and Commandant of the Marine Corps General James T. Conway (2006–10) signed *A Cooperative Strategy for 21st Century Seapower*. The sixteen-page, 4,700-word pamphlet was filled with pictures of Navy, Marine Corps, and Coast Guard forces engaged in activities that ranged across the spectrum of military operations. On page one, *A Cooperative Strategy* asserted the revolutionary strategic assumption upon which it was based: “Our Nation’s interests are best served by fostering a peaceful global system comprised of interdependent networks of trade, finance, information, law, people and governance.”⁷⁸ This system, it stated, is susceptible to disruptions from major power wars, regional conflict, terrorism, and natural disasters, all of which potentially threatened U.S. security and collective prosperity.⁷⁹

A Cooperative Strategy noted that in an era defined by increasing competition for influence and one in which the United States and its partners will find themselves neither fully at war nor fully at peace, the challenge was how “to apply seapower in a manner that protects U.S. vital interests even as it promotes greater collective security, stability, and trust.”⁸⁰ It noted that “*preventing wars is as important as winning wars*,” which

⁷⁷ McGrath, “Thoughts on ‘A Cooperative Strategy for 21st Century Seapower’ Two Year’s Later.” As he noted, “What I considered essential...was a ship that could be built in numbers—not 55, but more like 155, which we could send out around the world to the very edges of the empire to work the issues of global system protection.” Commander Bryan McGrath, U.S. Navy (Ret.), “...In Which I Respond to Professor Farley et al.,” entry on the blog *Information Dissemination*, December 4, 2009, <http://www.informationdissemination.net/2009/12/in-which-i-respond-to-professor-farley.html>.

⁷⁸ Roughead, Conway, and Allen, *A Cooperative Strategy*, 2.

⁷⁹ Ibid.

⁸⁰ Ibid.

implied that the skills and capabilities needed for the former might not necessarily be the same as those needed to ensure the latter—an observation that highlighted the unique abilities of U.S. naval forces.⁸¹ Reflecting Admiral Mullen’s desire to “elevate the discussion” and change the understanding that “maritime strategy exists solely to fight and win wars at sea,” the strategy argued for a broader, more systemic understanding of American sea power.⁸² It noted, “While defending our homeland and defeating adversaries in war remain the indisputable ends of seapower, it must be applied more broadly if it is to serve the national interest.”⁸³

In the next section, the future security environment was explained exclusively in terms of globalization. Reflecting Mullen’s comments about the system’s ability to increase collective prosperity, it noted,

Expansion of the global system has increased the prosperity of many nations. Yet their continued growth may create increasing competition for resources and capital with other economic powers, transnational corporations and international organizations.⁸⁴

It pointed out the importance of seaborne trade and noted that the world’s sea-lanes are the “lifelines of the modern global economy.”⁸⁵ In a sentence that implicitly fingered the Chinese, it noted that

⁸¹ Ibid. Emphasis in the original. In terms of required U.S. military capabilities, the argument that “*preventing war* (as opposed to narrower, more coercive-minded “detering war”) *is as important as winning war*” might be considered revolutionary. Among Navy admirals, the skills and military hardware needed to *win* wars are generally understood to the same as those needed to *deter* wars, the object of which is to deter action by potential enemies by elevating the calculated costs of aggressive behavior to a prohibitive level. But, if “prevention” means addressing the economic, political, and social conditions that are seen to underlay the rise of threats, then those skills and hardware required to prevent conflict (which would ostensibly be more constabulary and diplomatic than military in nature), would not only be *different* than those needed to deter and win wars, but they would be of *equal importance*. That said, sentiments about prevention and a broader understanding of deterrence (beyond the above statement) did not find their way into *A Cooperative Strategy*.

⁸² Mullen, remarks at the Current Strategy Forum.

⁸³ Roughead, Conway, and Allen, *A Cooperative Strategy*, 2.

⁸⁴ Ibid., 4.

⁸⁵ Ibid., 3.

Heightened popular expectations and increased competition for resources, coupled with scarcity, may encourage nations to exert wider claims of sovereignty over greater expanses of ocean, waterways, and natural resources—potentially resulting in conflict.⁸⁶

The section also addressed how the proliferation of advanced anti-access weapons systems was improving the ability of state and non-state actors to keep U.S. forces from projecting power overseas. It discussed how climate change would open new trade routes through the Arctic and foster or exacerbate natural disasters, regional crises, and social instability. Highlighting the growing importance of information as a source of strategic leverage, it asserted that “attacks on legal, financial, and cyber systems can be equally, if not more, disruptive than kinetic weapons.”⁸⁷ Reflecting the writings of Frank Hoffman, a retired Marine Corps officer and strategic thinker, it noted how conflict was evolving into “hybrid” warfare, in which state and non-state actors used a blend of traditional and irregular tactics, sophisticated and basic technologies, and decentralized planning and execution to achieve their political ends.⁸⁸

The next section, which was entitled the “Maritime Strategic Concept,” explained Roughead’s model, a graphical representation of which did not find its way into the document. At five pages, it was the document’s longest section. Its one-page introduction highlighted the virtues of a globally deployed U.S. maritime force. It stated that the ability of those forces to use the seas as a vast maneuver space and expand or contract U.S. power off-shore—thereby avoiding or mitigating the frictions of U.S. overseas bases—gave the United States an “asymmetric advantage.”⁸⁹ It highlighted how the “speed, flexibility, agility and scalability” of its forces gave the combatant commanders a range of flexible options and a rheostat to manage crises. As usual, it argued for forward

⁸⁶ Ibid., 4.

⁸⁷ Ibid., 5.

⁸⁸ Ibid., 4. See, for example, Frank G. Hoffman, “Complex Irregular Warfare: The Next Revolution in Military Affairs,” *Orbis* 50, no. 3 (Summer 2006): 395–411; “Conflict in the 21st Century: The Rise of Hybrid Wars” (Arlington, VA: Potomac Institute for Policy Studies, 2007); and “Hybrid Warfare and Challenges,” *Joint Force Quarterly* 52 (First Quarter 2009): 34–39.

⁸⁹ Paragraph based on Roughead, Conway, and Allen, *A Cooperative Strategy*, 6.

deployment: “*United States seapower will be globally postured to secure our homeland and citizens from direct attack and to advance our interests around the world.*”⁹⁰

This section also saw the document’s core statement, in which the national interests of the United States were identified explicitly with the stability of global trade, finance, and politics:

As our security and prosperity are inextricably linked with those of others, U.S. maritime forces will be deployed to protect and sustain the peaceful global system comprised of interdependent networks of trade, finance, information, law, people and governance.⁹¹

Unlike the Navy’s previous post-Cold War strategic statements, this one did not frame the Navy’s *raison d’être* in terms of its operational virtues and power projecting doctrine, but in the broader strategic context for which these were applied.

However, where the language up to this point was insistently systemic, the tone changed when addressing Roughead’s model. In the previous six pages, the word “system” was used ten times. In the four pages that described the model, it was used once. It addressed the top ellipse first, which was Regionally Concentrated, Credible Combat Power. Here, “credible combat power” would be continuously employed in the Western Pacific and the Arabian Gulf and Indian Ocean to protect U.S. vital interests, demonstrate to “friends and allies” that the United States was committed to regional security, and deter and dissuade potential foes and “peer competitors.”⁹² Like the 3/1 Strategy, however, *A Cooperative Strategy* does not mention carriers or naval strike warfare (or amphibious assault or anti-submarine warfare). Given the centrality of such capabilities in the Navy’s previous strategic statements, one can understand why many Navy leaders were worried about the strategy’s resource implications. In response, Vice

⁹⁰ Ibid. Emphasis in the original.

⁹¹ Ibid.

⁹² Ibid., 7. Of note, the U.S. Navy prefers to use the term “Arabian Gulf” instead of the “Persian Gulf.” The use of the latter lends credence to Iran’s claim that the Persian Gulf is essentially its domain.

Admiral Morgan would say that *A Cooperative Strategy* was about the *ends* of U.S. naval strategy, while the Navy Strategic Plan addressed the *means* and the Naval Operations Concept the *ways*.

The section then addressed the bottom ellipse, Globally Distributed, Mission Tailored Maritime Forces. If everything that came before was marked by clear language and a lively tone, the discussion about the bottom imperatives was presented in language crafted to drain them of whatever energy they might possess. The discussion focused on establishing a “persistent” worldwide presence that was organized by missions ranging from humanitarian relief, counter-terrorism, and irregular warfare to “peacetime” activities in the increasingly important areas of Africa and the Western Hemisphere.⁹³ In many respects, here—as so often in the past—the Navy’s systemic role was reduced to a recitation of the advantages of forward deployment. U.S. maritime forces would contribute to Homeland Defense by identifying and neutralizing threats as far from American shores as possible, and integrate their efforts with the joint force, the interagency, and international partners.⁹⁴ Sustaining cooperative relationships was also something that could not be done at a distance:

Although our forces can surge when necessary to respond to crises, *trust and cooperation cannot be surged*. They must be built over time so that the strategic interests of the participants are continuously considered while mutual understanding and respect are promoted.⁹⁵

Building relationships in turn required “cultural, historical, and linguistic expertise,” which for the Navy meant its new Foreign Area Officer community, which consisted of 400 officers. It stated that the regional combatant commanders’ Theater Security Cooperation plans needed to focus on: increasing partnerships and cooperation and capacities; preparing for humanitarian assistance missions; establishing regional

⁹³ Ibid., 8.

⁹⁴ Ibid.

⁹⁵ Ibid., 9. Emphasis in the original.

structures to enhance maritime governance; and enforcing the rule of law on the seas.⁹⁶ It explained how initiatives like the Global Maritime Partnership (a.k.a., the 1,000-Ship Navy) provided the cooperative structures needed to address the bottom ellipse's threats:

Maritime forces will work with others to ensure an adequate level of security and awareness in the maritime domain. In doing so, transnational threats—terrorists and extremists; proliferators of weapons of mass destruction; pirates; traffickers in persons, drugs, and conventional weapons; and other criminals—will be constrained.⁹⁷

The next section was “Implementing the Strategy,” which argued that U.S. maritime forces had to expand their core capabilities and blend them to address both major combat operations and peacetime engagement. In order, the six core capabilities were: 1) Forward Presence; 2) Deterrence (“conventional, unconventional, and nuclear”); 3) Sea Control; 4) Power Projection; 5) Maritime Security; and 6) Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Response.⁹⁸ The ordering was telling. Arguably, even including constabulary missions like “Maritime Security” and “Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Response” in the same list with “Sea Control” and “Power Projection” was a dramatic step, although some would say that the Navy had always been doing those missions anyway, and had merely found advantage in drawing attention to that fact. Be that as it may, placing Sea Control before Power Projection also signaled the increased importance of maritime security. It represented at least a tacit admission that the era in which the United States could project power unilaterally wherever it wished was over. The strategy had not become “cooperative” because the United States wished the world well, but because Washington required cooperation with allies and security and economic partners in order to achieve U.S. interests, which included maintaining American leadership of its system.

⁹⁶ Ibid.

⁹⁷ Ibid., 9–10.

⁹⁸ Ibid., 10–12.

J. CONCLUSION

In calling for a new maritime strategy, Admiral Mullen had noted that Mahan's ideas about decisive battle had distracted from his larger premise, which was about how naval forces uniquely shape the history of nations and peoples. One would be hard pressed to find a comment by a post-Cold War CNO that was more institutionally damning than CNO Mullen's statement, "Rid yourselves of the old notion—held by so many for so long—that maritime strategy exists solely to fight and win wars at sea, and the rest will take care of itself."⁹⁹ He was, in effect, revealing a missing dimension in American naval (and military) thinking that had caused the United States to neglect for too long the full range of political and economic effects that military power can achieve.

Vice Admiral Morgan's campaign to broaden the thinking of Navy admirals was a telling indication of the state of American naval thinking in the post-Cold War period. That he saw the need to present a basic brief on political economics, the security implications of globalization, and the systemic effects of sea power to a group of extraordinarily smart and busy Navy leaders speaks to their pinched sensibilities and knowledge gaps. He aimed to inform them, but also to show them the narrowness of their thinking, which was in itself an act decidedly at odds with the Navy's institutional culture. But Morgan was not satisfied to leave it at that. The process that he developed with Admiral Mullen's concurrence, a process that was managed superbly at the beginning by the Naval War College to great effect, ensured that the knowledge that informed the strategy was much broader, and more systemically aware, than mainstream thinking. Since the Naval War College reported directly to the CNO, other Navy leaders could not manipulate at least the first part of the process. Nor was it subject to consensual decision-making.

With Mullen gone, however, Morgan could not altogether avoid the end-game politics. Like the Navy's first major post-Cold War strategic statement, ...*From the Sea*

⁹⁹ Mullen, remarks at the Current Strategy Forum.

(1992), *A Cooperative Strategy* had in the weeks leading up to its release been altered by the Navy's most senior leaders. To an extent, their changes reflected the pragmatic needs of implementing the strategy in operational terms. They also reflected deeply held beliefs about the Navy's purpose and specifically how the fleet should be balanced. The changes also owed much to the realities of domestic politics. Like Secretary of the Navy O'Keefe and CNO Kelso in 1992, Secretary Winter and CNO Roughead were undoubtedly worried that justifying the Navy in terms that extended much beyond high-end power and major combat operations was politically dangerous. As Lieutenant Ennis noted,

While raising the prevention of war to the same level as the conduct of war was intentional, any sense that hard power was *less* important was unintentional. Although the writing team found this change [i.e., the replacement of the old model with Admiral Roughead's] hardest to swallow, the amount of criticism aimed at raising the stature of soft power in the document as it was released reinforced the wisdom of making this change.¹⁰⁰

One can thus understand why, as McGrath noted, the internal debates about the new maritime strategy were defined by the tension between warfighting and everything else.¹⁰¹ Still, as McGrath stated, Roughead's reordering of the six imperatives disrupted the document's flow and logic, but it was, in McGrath's eyes, worth beefing up the high end as it took much of the criticism of the strategy off the table.¹⁰²

To Winter and, to a lesser extent, Roughead, the safest, surest route to asserting the Navy's relevance and supporting its budget submission was to justify the Navy principally in terms of major combat operations. Winter, for one, was adamant that the strategy would not alter the fleet's composition or size. "Let there be no mistake," he noted at the 18th International Seapower Symposium that was held at the war college shortly after *A Cooperative Strategy*'s release,

¹⁰⁰ Ennis, "Inside the New Maritime Strategy," 70. Emphasis in the original.

¹⁰¹ McGrath, discussion with the author.

¹⁰² Ibid.

We are not walking away from, diminishing, or retreating in any way from those elements of hard power that win wars or deter them from ever breaking out in the first place....Our 30-year shipbuilding program...and our end strength targets will not change as a result of our new strategy.¹⁰³

Winter's promise was borne out. The force structure plan that was to follow within six months of *A Cooperative Strategy*'s release never materialized.

Like all of the Navy's strategic statements, *A Cooperative Strategy* reflected the limitations imposed by the requirements of consensus. As the 3/1 Strategy demonstrated, agreement could not be obtained if force structure was to be included in the discussion. How the fleet was balanced went to the heart of how Navy officers understood "strategy." By the same token, taking force structure off the table allowed a deeper, more fruitful discussion about the ends of sea power. Granted, the wide variance of opinion—which is inevitable as an institution attempts to redefine its purpose—required both sides to make considerable compromises.¹⁰⁴ Clearly, however, how Morgan and McGrath managed the competition sharpened both sides' respective arguments, and, as a result, made for a better document. The success of Morgan and McGrath in reconciling diverse opinions (and Routhead in keeping it so) was perhaps the most remarkable aspect of the new maritime strategy.

So, while systemic thinkers like Mullen and Morgan got their maritime strategy, how it would be implemented and resourced ultimately accorded more with the preferences of traditionalists like Admiral Nathman. By itself, *A Cooperative Strategy* implied that while the *ends* of U.S. naval strategy had changed fundamentally, with the adoption of the goal to protect the system, the *means* would not be altered. Although the *ways* in which those means were to be used promised to change, the extent of the change remained to be seen. Broadly speaking, the best way to protect and maintain the system

¹⁰³ Secretary of the Navy Donald C. Winter, remarks, 18th Biennial International Seapower Symposium, Naval War College, Newport, RI, October 18, 2007, quoted in "Report of the Proceedings of the Eighteenth International Seapower Symposium, 17–19 October 2007," ed. John B. Hattendorf with John W. Kennedy (Newport, RI: Naval War College, 2007).

¹⁰⁴ Till, "A View from Outside," 32.

appeared to be to focus on deterring wars from starting in the first place, and then from escalating to the point where they threatened global stability. Forces not required for that fundamental purpose could be spread around on constabulary missions whose increased importance was acknowledged, but not to the extent that they came at the expense of warfighting and coercive diplomacy as normally understood. Viewed in a somewhat uncharitable light, *A Cooperative Strategy* essentially admitted that the Navy, the Marine Corps and the Coast Guard had been protecting and sustaining the system all along, but were only now starting to understand that.

Regardless, however, a new—the true—maritime strategy had finally been developed. It had taken a number of implausible events for it to eventually emerge. It had taken the shock of an impending defeat in Iraq in 2004–07 to bring about a systemically oriented U.S. strategic approach, one more aware of the perils of unilateralism and more willing to cooperate with others. It had taken two costly, protracted, and irregular ground campaigns that called into question the relevance of the Navy and its strike warfare approach, which effectively narrowed avenues by which the Navy could justify itself. It had taken a systemic threat in the form of al-Qaeda, which endangered the flow of petroleum and trade, and new institutional experiences borne from post-9/11 operations. Finally, it had taken the implausible arrival of two maritime-minded Navy leaders to shift the terms of the strategic debate.

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XIV. CONCLUSION

A. EPILOGUE

Much of the reaction to *A Cooperative Strategy* was predictable. Whether in articles, the defense blogosphere, or in emails between defense and naval analysts, critics found fault on foreseeable grounds.¹ Many argued that a strategy without a resource plan is not a strategy at all, merely a strategic vision that did not even explain how the fleet was going to be employed. Some argued that it was too nuanced, that it did not really tell the Navy's "story" in a way that Congress and Americans could understand, which made it more difficult to justify its force structure. All of these arguments indicated that the document did not explain what a "maritime strategy" was as distinct from a "naval"

¹ Published analyses of *A Cooperative Strategy* included: Richard R. Burgess, "Maritime Security Cooperative Strategy Focuses on Common Threats, Mutual Interests," *Seapower* 50, no. 12 (December 2007): 14–18; Michael Bruno, "New Maritime Strategy Plan Meets Congressional Doubts," *Aviation Week's Aerospace Daily and Defense Report*, December 14, 2007, http://www.aviationweek.com/aw/generic/story_channel.jsp?channel=defense&id=news/MARI121407.xml; Steve Carmel, "Commercial Shipping and the Maritime Strategy," *Naval War College Review* 61, no. 2 (Spring 2008): 39–46; Christopher P. Cavas, "Critics: Strategy Lacks Specifics, Covers Familiar Ground," *Navy Times*, October 29, 2007 and "Why No One Believes the Navy: USN Leaders Have Growing Disconnect With Congress, Fleet," *Defense News*, May 26, 2007, <http://www.defensenews.com/story.php?i=3548400>; Seth Cropsey, "Don't Give Up the Ships: The Navy's Flawed New Strategy," *The Weekly Standard* 13, no. 10 (November 19, 2007), [http://www.weeklystandard.com/Content/Public/Articles/000/000/014/340sybwc.asp?page=2](http://www.weeklystandard.com/Content/Public/Articles/000/000/014/340sybwc.asp?page=2;); Sandra I. Erwin, "Naval Leaders Make a Case for the Relevance of Maritime Power," *The Hook* 35, no. 4 (Winter 2007) 6–7; Norman Friedman, "The Real Purpose of Strategy," U.S. Naval Institute *Proceedings* 133, no. 12 (December 2007): 90–91; Wayne P. Hughes Jr., "Implementing the Seapower Strategy," *Naval War College Review* 61, no. 2 (Spring 2008): 47–59; Robert Kaplan, "The Navy's New Flat-Earth Strategy," *The Atlantic* (October 2007); <http://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/2007/10/the-Navy-8217-s-new-flat-earth-strategy/6417/>; Amy Klamper, "Grand Strategies," *Sea Power* 50, no. 4 (April 2007): 20–24; Stuart Koehl, "Naval Strategy for the 21st Century: Addressing a Perceived Lack of Relevance," blog entry, *The Weekly Standard*, October 2007, <http://www.weeklystandard.com/Content/Public/Articles/000/000/014/263ckylb.asp>; John F. Lehman Jr., "A Bravura Performance," U.S. Naval Institute *Proceedings* 133, no. 11 (November 2007): 22–24; William T. Pendley, "The New Maritime Strategy: A Lost Opportunity," *Naval War College Review* 61, no. 2 (Spring 2008): 61–68; Bruce B. Stubbs, "Where are the Ships?" *Defense News*, October 22, 2007; Loren B. Thompson, "New Maritime Strategy: Three Cheers, and Three Complaints," Policy Issue brief, Arlington, VA: Lexington Institute, October 23, 2007; Geoffrey Till, "'A Cooperative Strategy for 21st Century Seapower': A View from Outside," *Naval War College Review* 61, no. 2 (Spring 2008): 25–38; David W. Wise, "Carrier Culture Shock," *Armed Forces Journal* 146 (June 2009), 30–31 and 54–55, <http://www.armedforcesjournal.com/2009/06/4034155/>; and Robert O. Work and Jan van Tol, "A Cooperative Strategy for 21st Century Seapower: An Assessment," Washington, DC: Center for Strategic and Budgetary Assessments, March 26, 2008.

strategy, which is unfortunate as they also indicated that these critics, many of whom were well-known naval analysts, did not understand the difference between the two, having little idea of what a maritime strategy was.²

Many charged that *A Cooperative Strategy* was simply not relevant to addressing what they saw as the greatest threat to U.S. security—China. They were upset that China was not called out, and did not think it enough to base a strategy only partly on “preventing major power war.” Along with the strategy’s soft-power message, they thought that defining the Navy as something as opaque as “system manager” only made it more difficult for the Navy to obtain advanced weaponry. Their arguments might have had more merit had they argued that globalization did not matter either because it had not fundamentally changed the U.S. security calculus or it was not durable enough to require a drastic change in U.S. naval strategy and, by implication, U.S. strategy. Absent such arguments, however, a kind of strategic schizophrenia emerges from such thinking: on one hand the United States is supposed to be in the opening stage of a cold war with China, another continental foe, and on the other dependent upon an increasingly intricate global supply chain that it cannot possibly defend on its own.

Some argued, more pertinently, that *A Cooperative Strategy* suggested the Navy is in the midst of an identity crisis, which is true enough. As Geoffrey Till noted, navies in general and the U.S. Navy in particular are struggling with whether to define and rationalize themselves in terms of a traditional “modern” model of naval development or a “post-modern” one. The traditional model is based on peer competition, “when navies

² The strategy’s core team had foreseen such critiques and had prepared answers in response. For a short-list of those responses, see Commander Bryan McGrath, U.S. Navy (Ret.), “Maritime Strategy 2007: The Team Leader Speaks,” on the blog *Steeljaw Scribe*, October 21, 2001, <http://steeljawscribe.com/2007/10/21/maritime-strategy-2007-the-team-leader-speaks>. The most articulate and well-reasoned debates about *A Cooperative Strategy* have been in the blogosphere, particularly on three blogs—Raymond Pritchett’s (a.k.a. “Galrahn”) *Information Dissemination*, <http://www.informationdissemination.net/>, which is the most widely read U.S. naval blog, Will Dossel’s *Steeljaw Scribe*, <http://steeljawscribe.com/>, and *CDR Salamander*, <http://cdrsalamander.blogspot.com/>.

view each other as the benchmark for naval development.”³ The post-modern one, which has a Mahanian-inspired “internationalist, collaborative and almost collective world outlook,” sees its role as defending the system.⁴ Till notes that neither globalization nor the collective system-defense role of navies is new, and that both models have existed alongside each other for centuries. Which model to adapt depends upon one’s attitudes toward globalization—an understanding of its endurance will see a continuation of the shift from the modern to the post-modern model, while one emphasizing its fragility compels a movement back to the modern one.⁵ Which direction one takes has obvious implications for the fleet’s composition. In general, the ever-conservative Navy has elected to maintain itself in accord with the modern model, while explaining and justifying itself, at least for the present, in the post-modern model—hence its identity crisis.

Notwithstanding Till’s astute analysis, most observers did not seem to grasp the document’s revolutionary nature. If the discussions surrounding its composition revealed anything, it was that a narrow operational and threat-centric view, as opposed to a systemic perspective, is still dominant in the Navy and defense establishment and, more generally, that the U.S. defense community is far from having mastered its Cold War experience, which is not to say that its Cold War experience is irrelevant to today’s challenges—far from it—only that the fact that it continues to influence strategic thinking has escaped most people’s notice. The latter, at any rate, can only count as an error. As

³ Geoffrey Till, “Maritime Strategy in a Globalizing World,” *Orbis* 51, no. 4 (Fall 2007): 570. For other efforts that examine *A Cooperative Strategy* in historical context, see John B. Hattendorf, “The United States Navy in the Twenty-first Century: Thoughts on Naval Theory, Strategic Constraints and Opportunities,” *The Mariner’s Mirror* 97, no. 1 (February 2011): 285–297; Martin Murphy, “Forward to the Past,” *Armed Forces Journal* 144 (December 2007): 27–29; and Geoffrey Till, “New Directions in Maritime Strategy, Implications for the U.S. Navy,” *Naval War College Review* 60, no. 4 (Autumn, 2007): 29–43.

⁴ Till, “Maritime Strategy in a Globalizing World,” 571.

⁵ *Ibid.*, 573.

Sun Tzu advised, self-knowledge is critical for success in strategy, a sentiment the importance of which has rarely been appreciated in the Navy.⁶

A Cooperative Strategy did catch the eye of several systemically oriented scholars beyond the circle of established naval thinkers, whose thinking mirrored theirs.⁷ These included Anne-Marie Slaughter and Michèle Flournoy, both later appointed to high-ranking positions in the administration of Barack H. Obama II. *A Cooperative Strategy* has also proved popular and influential among U.S. allies and partners, to an extent that may have escaped Washington's notice. By and large, the naval leaders of other nations have been ready to concede the need to sustain U.S. leadership over the system, because, namely, that leadership has brought them prosperity and high standards of living. Operationally speaking, *A Cooperative Strategy* has provided the leaders of many of the world's lesser navies with political "top-cover" that has allowed them to cooperate more with the U.S. Navy, which included local constabulary missions and a range of cooperative actions and exercises, and to create maritime domain awareness systems, most notably those developed by Italy, Brazil, Singapore, and Sweden.⁸

Much of the appreciation of U.S. allies and partners of *A Cooperative Strategy* stems from their understanding that it is a strategically defensive strategy—it seeks to sustain and maintain U.S. leadership of the system. *A Cooperative Strategy* frames the United States not as a unilaterally preemptive hegemon, but as a consolidating, status quo power that is managing the system with—and on behalf—of others. They see in the strategy an attempt to reconcile the demand for stability, which is necessary for economic growth, with the American drive to spread free-market and democratic ideals, an

⁶ "Know the enemy and know yourself; in a hundred battles you will never be in peril. When you are ignorant of the enemy but know yourself, your chances of winning or losing are equal. If ignorant both of your enemy and of yourself, you are certain in every battle to be in peril." Sun Tzu, *The Art of War*, trans. Samuel B. Griffith (London: Oxford University, 1963), 84.

⁷ See, for example, Michèle Flournoy and Shawn Brimley, "The Contested Commons," U.S. Naval Institute *Proceedings* 135, no. 7 (July 2009), <http://www.usni.org/magazines/proceedings/2009-07/contested-commons>.

⁸ Captain Robert C. Rubel, U.S. Navy (Ret.), discussion with the author, February 17, 2011, Newport, RI.

acceptable balance between the United States as cop-on-the-beat and revolutionary. They have identified, as Daniel Moran noted, “the paradox at the heart of U.S. foreign policy, which has long sought to transform the world in line with American moral and ideological preferences, while simultaneously reaching out for the stability required by our material and power-political interests.”⁹

To U.S. allies and partners, the strategy emphasizes stability and adopts a laissez-faire approach to advancing free-market and democratic ideals, which globalization seems to facilitate by itself. According to Barney Rubel, the naval leaders of U.S. allies and partners view *A Cooperative Strategy* as a contract of sorts, one that had completely changed their outlook from one of hostility to the United States—much of which was owed to the United States’ invasion of Iraq in 2003 and its inability to quell the insurgency—to one of embracing the U.S. Navy and its maritime strategy, a sentiment that must be kept in mind as Admiral Jonathan W. “Jon” Greenert (2011–present), Roughead’s successor, looks to refresh (or discard) the strategy.¹⁰

Predictably, *A Cooperative Strategy* fell on deaf ears in Congress. “It’s a nice, really slick brochure—[but] at the end of the day, it didn’t do so much for our country,” noted Congressman Gene Taylor (D-MS), the chairman of the House Armed Services Committee’s seapower and expeditionary forces subcommittee.¹¹ When the Navy failed to deliver the expected resource plan, Congress dismissed it. From its perspective, a strategy without a resource plan is simply a piece of paper. Congress missed the message that the U.S. government needs to develop policies that proactively work to prevent war (as opposed to deterring war) and sustain the U.S. leadership of the system. Like most of the actors on the stage of U.S. post-war naval strategy, Congress has yet to escape fully the verities of the Cold War.

⁹ Daniel J. Moran, “Stability Operations: The View From Afloat,” in *Naval Peacekeeping and Humanitarian Operations: Stability from the Sea*, ed. James J. Wirtz and Jeffrey A. Larsen (New York: Routledge, 2008), 14.

¹⁰ Rubel, discussion with the author.

¹¹ Bruno, “New Maritime Strategy Plan.”

In terms of the Navy's subsequent resource decisions, the strategy really was just a piece of paper. The Navy balked at linking the strategy to its programs or force levels. Its thirty-year shipbuilding plan has not changed much since the fall of 2005 even as the goal of a 313-ship navy, which CNO Mullen determined in 2006, remains problematic. Navy leaders did not testify about the risks of not having a budget that could, for example, populate Admiral Roughead's lower ellipse with the twenty-first century equivalent of the ubiquitous Victorian gunboat.¹² True, the U.S. Pacific Fleet is looking forward to deploying the Littoral Combat Ship, which was developed during CNO Clark's tenure, a vessel that resembles the constabulary-oriented gunboat of old. Although the Navy has given some thought to specialized constabulary platforms since A *Cooperative Strategy*, the fleet's structure is still squarely centered on major combat operations,

However, the Navy component commands and the numbered fleets have worked hard at "operationalizing" the strategy. They are working closely with the staffs of the regional combatant commanders to develop plans to shape the region to prevent conflict, for example. They are improving other navies' abilities to undertake local constabulary missions, particularly to fill the Navy's own capability gaps as it continues to structure its own fleet around the requirements for major combat operations. For its part, OPNAV N3/N5 has focused on developing partnerships and metrics and quantitative models to measure the fleet's local and regional effects. Much of the credit for all this goes to Roughead, whose understated leadership and determination to implement the strategy in real terms was instrumental in shifting the Navy toward a new consensus. Given the flexibility of naval platforms, it is far easier to change the *ways* of naval strategy than the *means*.

¹² Commander Bryan McGrath, U.S. Navy (Ret.), "On One Year Out of the Navy," entry on his blog *The Conservative Wahoo*, April 1, 2009, <http://conservativewahoo.blogspot.com>. (The entry was later removed.)

B. RECURRENT THEMES IN U.S. NAVAL STRATEGY

Before addressing *A Cooperative Strategy*'s prospects, it might be instructive to summarize the recurrent themes that run through the evolution of U.S. naval strategy in the post-Cold War era. The direction of U.S. strategy shaped that of U.S. naval strategy. Not aligning in some fashion to the administration's foreign and defense policies (which sometimes were not well aligned themselves) risked marginalization and raised fears that the Navy Department's share of the defense budget would decrease, a product of the Services' zero-sum mentality. There was, however, a limit to how much the Navy could and would change. Structurally, the Navy could not change the fleet's composition or posture in a rapid fashion. Ideationally, the Navy sought to maintain the flexibility that comes with a forward deployed, and balanced, carrier-centered fleet, an institutional demand that was reinforced by the direction of U.S. strategy through most of the era.

Another theme was the relationship between Congress and U.S. naval strategy. The surest and safest route to success in the budget wars was to justify the Navy and its preferred weapons systems in terms of the threat and in the context of war, not peace. Congress saw its purpose as supplying the *means* of warfare and—like Americans in general—saw the military's purpose as fighting and winning wars. Arguments about how U.S. naval forces help to underwrite the political, commercial, and security conditions necessary for global prosperity, which, by their nature, are abstract, did not resonate in Congress or with threat-sensitive Americans in general. What did resonate with the electorate and their representatives were those advanced and air power-enabled weapons systems and associated concepts that promised swift, decisive, and otherwise cost-effective victories on the battlefield.

How Goldwater-Nichols was “operationalized” by Department of Defense leaders did much to influence U.S. strategy and U.S. naval strategy in the post-Cold War era. Goldwater-Nichols raised the stature of the chairman of the Joints Chiefs of Staff, the Joint Staff, and the CINCs/combatant commanders and lowered that of the Services, whose purpose was now seen as simply to supply forces to the CINCs/combatant commanders. Goldwater-Nichols shaped an understanding of strategy such that the White

House, the secretary of defense, and chairman determined the *ends*, the CINCs determined the *ways*, while the CNO and OPNAV focused on the *means*. CNOs did not think that they were responsible for anything other than equipping, training, and organizing the Navy—strategy was someone else’s job. Ostensibly, the responsibilities of understanding how operational goals realized global U.S. interests and grand-strategic goals belonged to OSD and the regional CINCs. Yet, the former’s focus was not on strategy, but on managing the Department of Defense and the latter’s focus was on their particular region, which did little to promote a global understanding of how to use military power to achieve broader, grand-strategic goals.

The need to cater to particularly the CINCs/combatant commanders influenced U.S. naval strategy. By virtue of Goldwater-Nichols, they now had a hand in determining what kinds of capabilities the Services needed to field. As a result, the Navy’s new decision-making process focused even more on what *warfighting* capabilities were required. The process did not lend itself to examining what *constabulary* and *diplomatic* capabilities were needed or, in a larger sense, to understanding the Navy’s strategic effects. OPNAV’s *means*-centric focus meant that any strategic statement coming out of OPNAV had to hew to the Navy’s current messages about its programmatic and budget decisions. To preserve its preferred force structure and style of warfare, the Navy aligned itself with OSD’s and the CINCs/combatant commanders’ focus on warfighting, regional conflict, jointness, and strike warfare, which shifted the Navy’s operational outlook, not toward global and systemic requirements, but toward the problems of warfighting on land.

The Department of Defense’s more centralized strategic decision-making process and OSD’s mandate that the Services are not supposed to do strategy restricted opportunities for the Navy to represent the maritime dimensions of U.S. strategy. This was unfortunate because, as Colin Gray noted, the United States “is neither a natural sea

power nor does a maritime perspective and precepts dominate its strategic culture.”¹³ The changes wrought by Goldwater-Nichols further distracted the Navy from exploring its purpose in broader terms and relieved it from the more difficult task of understanding how achieving operational goals would lead to grand-strategic results. Despite a history that speaks of a close relationship between foreign and economic policy, trade, and the U.S. Navy, its leaders bore no responsibility to think in systemic terms.

Another recurrent theme was the effects of the ever-narrowing backgrounds of Navy leaders. In response to budget cuts, downsizing, and the need to find cost-efficiencies, the Navy promoted officers with backgrounds in programmatics and manpower. More than ever, Navy officers now assumed leadership positions devoid of anything but operational and programmatic experience and technical-technological know-how, none of which required a deep understanding of the Navy’s purpose. Their experiences shaped an understanding of U.S. naval strategy that was limited to how the fleet should be balanced, rationalized, and employed. Within the Navy, the word “strategy” had more to do with its relationship with Congress, OSD, the CINCs/combatant commanders, and the other services than to the larger world. Their experiences did little to lend an understanding of the Navy’s systemic effects or how the effects of globalization were altering the ability of the United States to manage its system.

Not surprisingly, the Navy’s strategic statements took a more operationally focused and politically expedient route. However, there were other related factors besides the three already mentioned—which, in summary, were: the need to align to U.S. strategy; the requirement to rationalize the Navy in terms understandable and amenable to Department of Defense leaders, Congress, and Americans; and the ever-narrowing backgrounds of Navy leaders. Navy leaders saw a need for a conceptual framework in the form of a declaratory statement that could align the activities of a complex warfighting

¹³ Colin S. Gray, “Strategy in the Nuclear Age: The United States, 1945–1991,” in *The Making of Strategy: Rulers, States, and War*, ed. Williamson Murray, MacGregor Knox, and Alvin Bernstein (Cambridge: Cambridge University, 1994), 594.

organization and to provide a sense of purpose to its members about their activities. To be successful, those statements needed to be accessible and acceptable to those in the fleet as well. But those statements had little effect on longer-ranged programmatic decisions because the Navy lacked a sequential strategic process by which declaratory strategy shaped resource strategies, which, in turn, shaped operational strategies. In reality, these were separate processes that ran in parallel. Declaratory strategy was simply the medium by which Navy leaders articulated the service's purpose to audiences outside and inside the institution.

Most of the Navy's strategic statements lacked a long-term follow-up plan that could, for example, shape programmatic decisions. But such a plan treads upon the command prerogatives of the next CNO, whose appointment was only a few years away, and who invariably had different ideas and needs. One of those needs was to offer something new. In the political climate of Washington, a place that demands constant change and where only "new" ideas can be assured a hearing, strategic statements have a shelf-life. Navy leaders have to replace or update their ideas or risk being seen as too slow in responding to changes in the domestic political or international security environments.

There were other factors that explain why the Navy's strategic statements took an operationally focused and politically expedient route. The institutional demand that the Navy's strategic statements had to be arrived at by consensus among the Navy's senior leaders worked to marginalize the ideas of those few leaders who had strategic backgrounds and of those in the Navy's strategy community, which that developed those statements. During the post-Cold War period, the number of those leaders with strategic backgrounds and those in the community that produced those leaders dropped off, which, among others, was partly the result of the OSD-mandated belief the Navy was not supposed to do strategy. As a result, the stature and influence of the Navy's once-cohesive strategy community waned, and there were fewer and fewer officers that could take ideas particularly from those strategic statements that were institutionally abandoned

or marginalized and apply them to the next set of political or strategic problems that had to be solved.

The Navy-Marine Corps relationship was yet another factor that shaped the content of the Navy's strategic statements. The post-Cold War era saw the Marine Corps reach institutional parity with the Navy, the result of Goldwater-Nichols and the disappearance of the Soviet navy as a threat, the latter of which brought about a shift in U.S. naval strategy from blue water to operations ashore, a move that benefited both the services institutionally. However, joint Navy-Marine Corps strategic statements were also subject to consensus among Navy and Marine Corps leaders. Yet the backgrounds of the Marine Corps's leaders were similarly narrow (if not more so), and were shaped by the Marine Corps's identity, which is all about warfighting. The Marines did not understand or tolerate for that matter global thinking on the part of the Navy. The partnership bent the direction of U.S. naval strategy from a global perspective toward the Marines' focus on the operational art of warfare and the battlefield, neither of which required a deeper understanding of the Navy's strategic purpose.

C. WHAT ARE A COOPERATIVE STRATEGY'S PROSPECTS?

A Cooperative Strategy has clearly influenced the direction of U.S. strategy since its release in 2007. As chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, Admiral Mullen continued to carry the flag of systemic thinking, which has revealed itself most recently in the 2010 QDR, the 2011 *National Military Strategy*, and the 2012 Defense Strategic Guidance, the last of which is entitled "Sustaining U.S. Global Leadership: Priorities for 21st Century

Defense.”¹⁴ Throughout much of 2011, for example, Mullen and Secretary of Defense Robert M. Gates adamantly argued that economic power is the father of military power. In general, Department of Defense leaders seem to be casting off Cold War vestiges. They are starting to understand what the United States’ position as leader of the world system means and the implications for the nation’s security and prosperity should it lose that position. Even if this is an idea the Navy has not fully taken to heart, it is at least the first U.S. military service to take it seriously as a strategic concept.

To guide U.S. strategy making as the nation comes out of its ground wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, Mullen lobbied the Obama administration to develop a grand strategy. Pentagon leaders were looking for the twenty-first century equivalent of National Security Council Report 68 (NSC-68), which, having been endorsed by President Truman in 1951, served as the conceptual foundation for an activist version of containment. They were looking for something that could organize, relate, and align a vast array of U.S. government and allied goals and interests in much the same way that containment did during the Cold War. It is reasonable to assume that a new U.S. strategic outlook would be more appreciative of a maritime-systemic approach, one that is well-suited to the interests of a nation whose prosperity and security have always been linked to the vitality of the world economy, and to the free markets, open societies, and democratic politics that have (so far) accompanied sustained economic success.

¹⁴ *Quadrennial Defense Review Report of 2010* (Washington, DC: Department of Defense, Government Printing Office, February 2010), <http://www.defense.gov/qdr/qdr%20as%20of%2029jan10%201600.PDF>; *The National Military Strategy of the United States: Redefining America’s Military Leadership* (Washington, DC: Department of Defense, Government Printing Office, February 2011), http://www.jcs.mil/content/files/2011-02/020811084800_2011_NMS_-_08_FEB_2011.pdf; and The Defense Strategic Guidance, “Sustaining U.S. Global Leadership: Priorities for 21st Century Defense” (Washington, DC: Department of Defense, Government Printing Office, January 5, 2012), http://www.defense.gov/news/Defense_Strategic_Guidance.pdf. The opening lines of the Defense Strategic Guidance were: “The United States has played a leading role in transforming the international system over the past sixty-five years. Working with like-minded nations, the United States has created a safer, more stable, and more prosperous world for the American people, our allies, and our partners around the globe than existed prior to World War II.” Defense Strategic Guidance, 1. Although, in practical terms, U.S. military leaders are still struggling to understand what a systemic approach means and how one should go about sustaining U.S. leadership of the system.

However, at the current juncture, U.S. leaders are cutting the federal budget, and in particular, the defense budget. Herein lies the crux for the Navy. The direction of U.S. strategy promises to continue to be systemic. But as a strategic statement, *A Cooperative Strategy* has been unable thus far to generate the fiscal support needed to afford the next generation of warships and aircraft. It may not matter if *A Cooperative Strategy* aligns with or informs U.S. strategy (which highlights that one should not confuse strategies for institutional relevance with those meant to generate strategic effects). In an era stricken with inter-service competition for resources and the desperate need to recapitalize the fleet, whose numbers have decremented to levels not seen since 1916, *A Cooperative Strategy*'s prospects will ultimately rest on the Navy's ability to secure the numbers and types of warships it needs to respond to an enormous diversity of challenges.

The temptation for Navy leaders to define and justify the Navy in terms of traditional great power conflict may prove irresistible for budgetary reasons alone. As Colin Gray noted, "The characteristic twenty-first-century perils tend not to carry the kind of implications for military posture that are easily explained to sceptical taxpayers."¹⁵ Such a course would simplify the Navy's resource acquisition problems and would probably represent the path of least resistance toward obtaining the necessary budgetary support for a fleet that, while ostensibly designed to address a notional Chinese threat, could be employed to sustain U.S. leadership of the system, much as the present one does. A potential adversary like China—which seems to be implementing a long-term systemic strategy of its own—brings its own clarity and theatrics that can more easily animate congressional support. There are more indications than not that the Navy is heading in this direction. Navy leaders may very well use the broad cover provided by *A Cooperative Strategy* for a few years before they unmask at some point what promises to be a threat-centric strategic approach that, among others, signals a return to Till's modern model of naval development and, presumably, the return of maritime ideas to the margins of official consideration.

¹⁵ Colin S. Gray, "Strategic Thoughts for Defence Planners," *Survival* 52, no. 3 (June–July 2010): 172.

The result might be a tactical victory for the Navy as an institution in competition with the other services. But surely it is shortsighted to believe that the ends of maritime strategy should be limited to obtaining the means to employ naval power.

D. RECOMMENDATIONS

Overall, the Navy will need to do much more if it wants to make its new maritime strategy the focus of its institutional identity, as the old one was, and otherwise become more strategically proficient. The Navy needs to ask questions that require its leaders to put aside their in-baskets and reflect upon what is required to cope with the forces wrought by globalization.¹⁶ One need not be any sort of alarmist to recognize that, left to themselves, there is no reason to assume the decentralized forces that are reshaping the world system before our eyes will unfold in ways favorable to the interests the Navy exists to defend—interests that, as *A Cooperative Strategy* insists, are not merely American, but global in themselves.

Regardless of how globalization proceeds, the Navy still needs to understand and represent the maritime-systemic dimensions of U.S. strategy in a manner that is befitting of the world's only global Navy. Who else, after all, can realistically be expected to do so? As one student of these matters has noted:

The surest path to victory in any global conflict “hot” or “cold” is to conduct yourself so as to insure that the rich countries and critical resource areas of the world end up on your side. This has been the essence of

¹⁶ See, for example, Richard Falk, “State of Siege: Will Globalization Win Out?” *International Affairs* 73, no. 1. (Jan 1997): 123–136; Michael Mastanduno, “A Realist View: Three Images of the Coming International Order,” in *International Order and the Future of World Politics*, ed. T.V. Paul and John A. Hall (Cambridge: Cambridge University, 1999), 19–40; John Gerard Ruggie, “Multilateralism: the Anatomy of an Institution,” *International Organization* 46, no. 3 (Summer 1992): 561–598; John Gerard Ruggie, “Territoriality and Beyond: Problematizing Modernity in International Relations,” *International Organization* 47, no. 1 (Winter 1993): 139–174; Michael Zürn and Stephan Leibfried, “Reconfiguring the National Constellation,” in *Transformations of the State?*, ed. Stephan Leibfried and Michael Zürn (Cambridge: Cambridge University, 2005), 1–35, and David Held and Anthony McGrew, “The Great Globalization Debate,” Robert Keohane and Joseph Nye, “Globalization: What’s New? What’s Not? (And So What?),” and James N. Rosenau, “Governance in a New Global Order,” all three of which are in *The Global Transformations Reader* 2nd edition, ed. David Held and Anthony McGrew (London: Polity/Blackwell, 2003): 1–42; 75–83, and 223–233, respectively.

maritime strategy since the Age of Sail, and there is no reason to expect the pattern to change anytime soon.¹⁷

At a minimum, as James Billington has observed, “We ought to be seeking tentative answers to fundamental questions, rather than definitive answers to trivial ones.”¹⁸

In practical terms, OPNAV needs more than just program managers and operational analysts. It needs officers educated as strategists. It needs officers trained as “strategic analysts” and an in-house analytical organization that can, among others, understand the Navy’s strategic effects and, with the combatant commander and their naval component commands, work toward developing ways to link operational goals to strategic effect. Doing so will require learning how to look beyond the requirements of the geographic combatant commanders, whose regional structure has, at least arguably, become an obstacle to unifying action at a global level. Perhaps most painfully, the Navy will need to admit more theory into its “thinking,” and accept that operational flexibility and readiness and programmatic know-how are no substitute for analytic rigor of a strategic sort. For far too long, Navy leaders have convinced themselves that the tactical effects of naval power projection translate automatically into success at the strategic level. Despite possessing unique importance in the U.S. state-global market relationship, the Navy’s understanding of how it functions within that relationship has always been inexcusably superficial. The need for such an understanding has become more acute given the world’s increasing interdependencies and the nexus between U.S. economic power and security.

The Navy needs to explore further the implications of the argument that preventing war (as opposed to deterring war) is as important as winning war. This is not a new or novel idea in itself, but it is one that has never gained much institutional traction. There is no institute to study the prevention of conflict inside the Navy, or for that matter

¹⁷ Moran, “Stability Operations,” 17.

¹⁸ James H. Billington, quoted in Ann Geracimos, “New Librarian Called Fundamental Scholar,” *The Washington Times*, September 14, 1987.

the Department of Defense, which has think tanks that have studied prevention during and after the Cold War, but mostly from a coercive-deterrent perspective. The act of exerting influence in peacetime should receive as much analytical attention as that spent on fighting war.¹⁹ Yet no service has more to gain than the Navy (and Marine Corps) from demonstrating that its forces do prevent war, whether by shaping the environment to improve economic and political conditions, building alliances, or dissuading or coercively deterring foes.

The Navy needs to rekindle its partnership with the Marine Corps to help determine how the latter fits within *A Cooperative Strategy* conceptually and materially. Preoccupied with the demands of fighting two ground wars, the United States has in recent years employed the Marine Corps as a second army. As a consequence, the Marine Corps has not given much thought to how to implement *A Cooperative Strategy*, or what it really means for it as an institution. As it attempts to re-grow its naval roots, as it did after the Vietnam War, the Marine Corps finds itself uncharacteristically lagging behind the Navy in terms of conceptual innovation. But the Navy has not bent over backwards much to help the Marine Corps. Instead, it has worked closely with the Air Force on a concept called *AirSea Battle*, in which the Marine Corps is a junior partner. This concept is aimed at countering the growing anti-access challenges posed by the likes of China and Iran. It also seeks to produce interdependencies between Navy programs and Air Force programs as a way to ward-off attempts by Congress to piecemeal their respective budget submissions and programs. Old habits die hard.

¹⁹ For an example of this kind of research, see Robert E. Looney, "Market Effects of Naval Presence in a Globalized World: A Research Summary," in *Globalization and Maritime Power*, ed. Sam J. Tangredi (Washington, DC: National Defense University, 2002), 103–131. Looney summarizes three Naval Postgraduate School research efforts that sought to identify and quantitatively measure the economic benefits of U.S. naval presence and crisis response on world oil prices. Among others, he examines three case studies—Operation Desert Shield in 1990, the Kuwait-Iraq border crisis in 1994, and the Persian Gulf shipping crisis in 1987 that saw the reflagging of Kuwait tankers to a U.S. flag. He noted, "When oil futures markets become aware of naval forward engagement/crisis response, oil prices decline," which, he noted, brought at least \$1 billion of benefits to the U.S. economy. Looney, "Market Effects of Naval Presence," 104 and 129.

The Navy needs to explain in clearer and more compelling terms the merits of a maritime-systemic strategic approach. It needs to provide the broader political, economic, and historical context that was missing in *A Cooperative Strategy*, and otherwise work to redress the threat-centric outlook of Congress and American society. If nothing else, the Conversations with the Country instigated by Admirals Mullen and Morgan indicated the need for a long-term comprehensive strategic communications plan. The lack of long-term follow-through means that, at least at the present, Americans, U.S. officials, and even members of the U.S. Navy know only marginally more about the implications of globalization for American security than they did before *A Cooperative Strategy* was promulgated.²⁰

For all his implementation skills, Admiral Roughead nonetheless squandered the elevated conceptual position that Morgan and Mullen had worked so hard to obtain. His forte was implementing the strategy, which he did by devoting much time and effort to engagements overseas. He did not communicate its broader meaning or lead the effort to expand and strengthen its arguments. *A Cooperative Strategy* was not written for its moment, but for a rapidly approaching future when war-weary Americans would discover they had little stomach for costly interventions and a hortatory threat-centric approach. Given the fragile state of the economy and looming defense budget cuts, Americans might welcome a less offensive-minded approach that relates prosperity and security, aims to sustain U.S. systemic leadership, and seeks to prevent wars as much as win them.

The Navy should establish chairs for maritime studies at select civilian universities. It should contemplate creating a “Strategic Analysis” (as opposed to an Operational Analysis) curriculum at the Naval Postgraduate School.²¹ It might consider

²⁰ One should not dismiss the difficulties involved in such an undertaking as neither Americans in general nor the Navy is receptive to the value of historical insight. See Leonard Krieger, *Time's Reasons: Philosophies of History Old and New* (Chicago: University of Chicago, 1989), 1–8 and John B. Hattendorf, “The Uses of Maritime History In and For the Navy,” *Naval War College Review* 56, no. 2 (Spring 2003): 13–38.

²¹ Strictly speaking, such a curriculum would be a revival of the Naval Postgraduate School’s Strategic Planning master’s degree program, which, as noted, was closed down shortly before 9/11.

an institute for maritime research and other such means by which to close the gap between American scholarship and maritime affairs, which is much too wide given the historic relationship between U.S. prosperity, security, and sea power. As Colin Gray noted, “Despite a glittering record of strategy accomplishment in the twentieth century, sea power has not attracted the balanced appreciation that it deserves.”²²

In historiographic terms, navies have always attracted but a fraction of scholarship compared to armies. In general, political scientists, economists, and political economists have not admitted navies into their research.²³ They have not much explored how military issues interact with economic and political ones in peacetime. Nor have they immersed themselves deeply enough in maritime affairs to advance theories. In comparison to the (insistent) claims of airpower theory, the indirect effects of maritime strategies rarely yield the types of information that make it more amenable for study by the nomothetic disciplines of political science and economics, for example.

The Navy needs to question how it manages, educates, and employs its strategists. The Navy’s once-heralded strategy community is ever-so-slowly recovering from the policies of CNOs like Vern Clark—who, ironically enough, used its members more than most CNOs, but did not think the Navy needed a community to produce them. The Navy should question the type of degrees held by its strategists, which, by and large, have been in international relations, which tend to promote a Realist, state-centric outlook. The

²² Colin S. Gray, *The Navy in the Post-Cold War World: The Uses and Value of Strategic Sea Power* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University, 1994), 3.

²³ Notable exceptions include Bernard Brodie, *Sea Power in the Machine Age* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University, 1941) and *A Layman’s Guide to Naval Strategy* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University, 1942); George Modelski, *Seapower in Global Politics, 1494–1993* with William R. Thompson (Seattle, WA: University of Washington, 1988); and Colin S. Gray, whose laudable efforts on sea power include *The Navy in the Post-Cold War World*, *Leverage of Sea Power: The Strategic Advantage of Navies in War* (New York: The Free Press, 1988), and “Seapower for Containment: The U.S. Navy in The Cold War,” in *Navies and Global Defense: Theories and Strategy*, ed. Keith Neilson and Elizabeth Jane Errington (Westport, CT: Praeger, 1995), 181–207.

Navy also needs strategists who also have degrees in economics, political economics, strategic studies, and history.²⁴

The same goes for the way the Navy trains and educates its officers. There has been a growing acceptance in the Navy of the need for the kind of global thinking that undergirds the maritime strategy. But little has changed in terms of the average officer's career track. In fact the situation is getting worse. Navy officers now have less time in their careers for post-graduate education of any kind, let alone the kind of education that could put their operational and programmatic experiences in broader perspective. As Colin Gray noted, "An education in strategy should inoculate against undue fascination with means and processes as ends in themselves."²⁵ The Navy still expects its officers to earn master's degrees before becoming commanders, but opportunities for in-residence programs are fast disappearing, at least partly a reflection of the fact that the Navy's operating tempo is as high as it has been in the post-Cold War era. Meanwhile, most billets in OPNAV's Strategy and Policy Division (N51), for example, that require a master's degree are being filled with officers who do not have one, which has prompted the Bureau of Personnel to try to remove the requirement because they cannot fill those billets. This in turn lowers the required through-put of the Naval War College and the Navy's civilian graduate school programs in political-military affairs such as those at Tufts and Harvard, which educates officers with the strategic expertise the Navy ought to be cultivating, not pruning back.

Culturally then, not much has changed since the end of the Cold War. "The seafaring and scientific technique of the naval profession," as Winston Churchill once observed, "makes such severe demands upon the training of naval men, that they have very rarely the time or opportunity to study military history and the art of war in

²⁴ For a reflection on what kinds of backgrounds and experiences facilitate strategic thinking, see Andrew W. Marshall, "Strategy as a Profession for Future Generations," in *On Not Confusing Ourselves: Essays on National Security Strategy in Honor of Albert and Roberta Wohlstetter*, ed. Andrew W. Marshall, J. J. Martin, and Henry S. Rowen (Boulder, CO: Westview, 1991), 302–311.

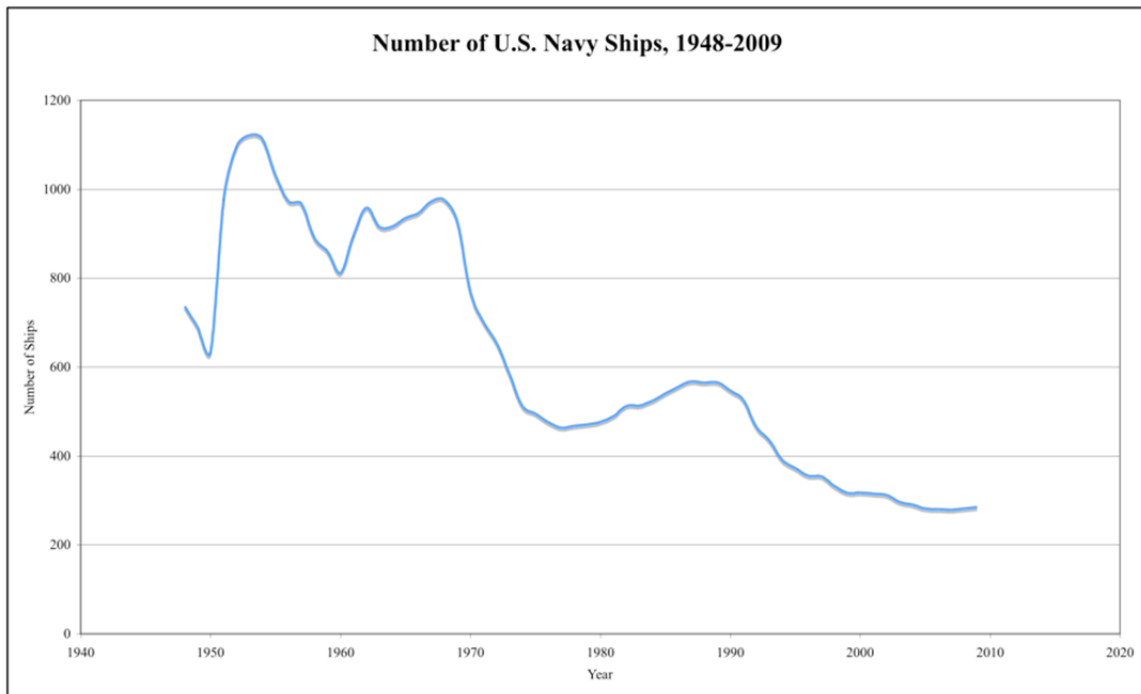
²⁵ Colin S. Gray, *War, Peace, and Victory: Strategy and Statecraft for the Next Century* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1990), 23.

general.”²⁶ To ensure the United States maintains its leadership of the system, and otherwise understands how to wield the full range of military power to serve its interests and those of its key security and economic partners, the Navy will have to work hard to reverse or at least mitigate the corrosive effects of such institutional beliefs. As British historian Bernard Semmel noted, “No community can long survive profound disharmonies in its ideology, interests, and instruments of power.”²⁷ Regardless of where globalization may lead, there is only one institution on earth currently capable of conceiving and executing a maritime strategy. The fact that the U.S. Navy cannot do so alone does not relieve it of the requirement to exercise strategic leadership.

²⁶ Philip Ziegler, *Mountbatten* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1985), 220.

²⁷ Bernard Semmel, *Liberalism and Naval Strategy: Ideology, Interest, and Sea Power during the Pax Britannica* (Boston: Allen and Unwin, 1986), 181.

APPENDIX



Source: Ronald O'Rourke, "Navy Force Structure and Shipbuilding Plans: Background and Issues for Congress" (Washington, DC: Congressional Research Service, August 17, 2010), 31.

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